



Nurtured we thrive

Collective Worship Policy

Compassion, Responsibility, Justice, Forgiveness

Members of Staff Responsible	Miss N Saunders
Position	Christian Distinctiveness Lead
Dated	September 2025
Date of Next Review	September 2026
This policy is underwritten by our school Christian vision and the school values of compassion, responsibility, justice and forgiveness. This forms an integral part of all teaching and assessment at Thurnham Church of England Infant School.	

Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.
- **Invitational** – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to ‘do anything’. Rather, worship will provide 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. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community’s behaviour and actions.

Aims of Collective Worship

Collective worship offers pupils, staff and the wider school community the opportunity to:

- Gather together to share sacred moments of joy, challenge, grief and love
- Explore the school’s distinctive Christian vision and values in action
- Reflect on the nature of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still, pray and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Explore Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other’s joys and challenges
- Celebrate significant and special times in the Christian calendar

In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship:

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
- b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican / Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship through invitational and inclusive language:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship
- Using Collects as a focus for worship

Implementation

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, through the Year 2 Worship Warriors, the clergy of our local church and external visitors in consultation with the Collective Worship Leader, Miss N Saunders. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using planning guidance from a variety of sources including www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/ and Canterbury Diocesan collective worship planning, which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long- and short-term planning of worship and this enables continuity and ensures the Christian calendar is followed.

Day	Lead
Monday	EYFS Class worship. 9.10am Key Stage 1 Worship.
Tuesday – 9.10am	Whole school: Worship through Song – Mr Pring
Wednesday	Class worship
Thursday – 9.10am	Whole school – Rev. Rob Tugwell two per month. Staff rota for other weeks.
Friday	Year group celebration worship time.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in acts of worship. These include music, silence, symbolism, videos, drama and props.

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – we welcome the community with music, quiet reflection time, liturgy and the lighting of a candle.
- **Engage** – we share, a Bible reading/story, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message. This can be through drama, props or video.
- **Respond** – pupils discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing.
- **Send** – we share, the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning / behaviour. We close with reflection, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our worship candle.

Expectations of Pupils

In Thurnham Church of England Infant School, there is an expectation that all pupils will be involved in worship on a regular basis. These may be opportunities planned ahead of time, through the Year 2 Worship Warriors or unplanned through questioning, asking for volunteers or simply responding to moments of spontaneity.

Pupils are invited to evaluate and reflect on the impact of acts of worship they have joined with. Their voice is integral to improving the structure, content and in shaping future plans for worship.

This pupil voice is undertaken by Foundation Governors, Worship Warriors and the Christian Distinctiveness Lead.

Pupil worship leaders are supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship on a voluntary basis.

Developing Worship

Parents, pupils and adults at Thurnham Church of England Infant School are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a Church School context. Therefore, all those leading worship, including clergy, should have access to regular diocesan led training. (Diocese training brochure is available here <https://canterburydiocese-training.thinkific.com/> Please get the code from the Christian Distinctiveness Lead so that we are not charged).

The leader for collective worship will:

- Ensure that all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship, therefore meeting statutory requirements.
- Ensure that collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring.
- Attend regular training and network meetings with Canterbury Diocese, offering these to the Foundation Governors.
- Produce and regularly review the collective worship policy to ensure that it remains reflects current practice and thinking.
- Liaise with the Headteacher and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of collective worship across the school through the Christian Aspects Steering groups.
- Ensure all stakeholders know what the expectations of worship are when leading, planning and joining worship.
- Join those who are leading worship to provide supportive feedback on how worship could be developed.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship on the whole school community by gathering pupil and adult voice.
- Signpost staff to a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and resources, to help develop their confidence in leading acts of worship.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited to lead collective worship.
- Meet with and encourage pupil leaders of worship to enable them to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship.

Visitors Leading Worship

Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies; they will be greeted by the Headteacher for an introductory meeting before their first visit. This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of the collective worship leader and senior leaders to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and our school's vision. They will be supported and monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation process of worship.

Self-assessment and Inspection

Our school regularly evaluates all acts of collective worship and the impact they have on the school and our wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. The Christian Aspects Steering group evaluate against the Collective Worship audit tool.

The impact of collective worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).

Parental Withdrawal

Worship is regarded as a special time in our school day where we gather as a school family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, collective worship is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity. We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship, so would welcome the opportunity to discuss this decision with them. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw children from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher.

Appendix

What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

"... Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

Collective worship, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.

Collective Worship should be:

*"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes."
(DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)*

Therefore, collective worship in Church of England schools must be inclusive and invitational of all, to ensure all can be present with integrity.

The legal requirements of collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools.

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- The Governing Body should 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
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher (*DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53*)
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- **All** registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship'.
- If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, then the school must comply. (*Education Reform Act 1988. s9 (3)*) The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from collective worship.