

# Fordham All Saints C of E (VC) Primary School



Pride in our Learning

Name of Policy	Collective Worship
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## **Introduction**

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 diocesan authorities.

Collective Worship is a daily event at Fordham All Saints C of E (VC) Primary School. As a Church school we view this time as an integral part of our ethos.

## **Rationale and Aims**

Our policy and practices are in accordance with the Education Reform Act (1988), which states that:

- 'all children in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship'
- and 'collective worship should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.

In line with "Collective Worship Guidance" issued by the Church of England Education Board in May 2021 acts of worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring.

**Inclusive:** Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God.

**Invitational:** Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should 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.

**Inspiring:** Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in Fordham All Saints C of E (VC) Primary School to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it 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, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

## **Collective worship in Fordham All Saints C of E (VC) Primary School will do the following:**

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation; and develop virtues such as resilience,

determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.

- 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.

### **Collective Worship in practice**

At Fordham All Saints C of E (VC) Primary School we normally base our acts of collective worship on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an act of collective worship. We expect everyone to take an active part in the act of collective worship.

While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold acts of worship that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Collective worship takes place each day and generally involves the whole school, although on some occasions the school may separate into smaller gatherings.

Collective worship is led by staff, pupils, clergy, and other invited guests.

As a minimum, acts of collective worship should include a prayer and/or an opportunity for children to reflect in silence. Collective worship may also include:

- singing hymns and songs
- listening to music
- talks on themes that are thought-provoking and deal with moral, social and spiritual issues
- stories and readings from the Bible
- drama, mime and dance
- the use of pictures and artefacts
- the presentation and celebration of pupils' work and other achievements.

Children should be invited to participate and respond, although those leading collective worship should be aware of wide range of backgrounds, spiritual experience, and beliefs amongst the children. Pupils from other faith backgrounds should be respected and should feel comfortable.

### **The Wider Contribution of Collective Worship**

The prime function of collective worship is to contribute to the spiritual development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- learn about Christian beliefs and practices
- understand how beliefs affect the decisions people make in their daily lives
- learn about key events in the Bible and their relevance to today
- pray and reflect
- participate in worship

However, collective worship also promotes children's learning and development in other areas:

1. to the moral development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- reflect on matters concerning right and wrong
- hear about incidents in which, and people in whom, goodness or right are exemplified
- learn about religious and other teachings concerning right and wrong.

2. to the social development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- gather with others for a common purpose
- share times of joy and sadness with others
- learn how to behave appropriately within a specific social setting
- increase self-confidence in public speaking and dramatic performance.

3. to the cultural development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- hear and respond to music from a range of times, places and cultures
- reflect upon ideas concerning the concept of beauty
- appreciate the range of talents and gifts found within the school community and beyond.

4. to the intellectual development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:

- learn and to engage with their minds
- have ideas concerning values confirmed or challenged
- reflect on the importance of learning in the context of our school community
- consider the power of words.

### **The Pattern of Collective Worship**

Themes are followed on a half-termly basis and guidance on this is provided for staff and visitors. Collective worship reflects the major festivals of the Christian calendar and also explores social, moral and cultural issues, and may include a focus on each of our Core Christian Values. Children are introduced to significant people who have shaped the world we live in today both from Christian and secular sources. Themes are selected that will stimulate the imagination of the children and engage their interest and commitment. By such active involvement it is hoped that the children will take on board the issues raised and reflect upon their lives and distinctive contribution they can make to our society.

### **Presentation**

Collective worship should be properly prepared and presented. Variety in presentation is important. Stories can be told as well as read. Good timing is essential, especially with the increasing demands of the curriculum. In practice, the

entire act of collective worship (including the focus, supporting song and notices) should not exceed 20 minutes. Whilst singing and notices may sometimes have to be sacrificed due to the pressures of time, the focal point (which includes the prayer or reflection time) should remain the essential ingredient. Class teachers are responsible for leading each class quietly and calmly into and out of the hall. All staff are responsible for ensuring good behaviour and attention.

### **Collective Worship is structured as follows:**

#### **Community Assembly**

The Executive Headteacher leads this act of collective worship for each school

#### **Singing Assembly**

This is led by a teacher and focuses on learning hymns and songs which are relevant to our current theme or forthcoming festivals. A quiet period of reflection and prayer is included.

#### **Church Lead Worship**

This is led by a member of the local church once a week and follows its own pattern and themes.

#### **Celebration Assembly**

This is an opportunity to celebrate children's birthdays, achievements in school through recognition in the Gold Book; achievements out of school such as swimming or football certificates and Cubs or Brownie badges. It is also an opportunity for children to share examples of work they are proud of.

### **Links with Fordham All Saints Church**

The church is opposite the school and plays an important part in the life of the school. We worship in All Saints Church at various times in the year such as Harvest, Christmas, and Easter and at the end of each academic year. We hold a Leaver's Service for our Year 6 pupils at the end of the summer term, where these pupils are presented with a Bible as a gift from the school and church.

### **Right of Withdrawal**

We expect all children to attend collective worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.