

Bishop Henderson Church of England Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

Review

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
Annual	February 2026	Headteacher	February 2027

Ratification

Agreed by Governors on	February 2026
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Vision Statement

At Bishop Henderson Church of England Primary School, we are committed to equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act of October 2010. We endeavour to make a positive contribution to the whole community by demonstrating qualities such as courage, compassion and creativity, while celebrating cultural diversity. This commitment applies to our work in the classroom, our pupil support systems, our recruitment and retention of staff and our work in the local and wider community. We promote the principles and practices of equality and justice throughout the school and we aim to be a school where everyone:

- is respected and respects others
- takes part in the life of the school
- achieves to their potential
- develops skills essential to life
- exercises choice
- celebrates cultural diversity

Rationale

The daily act of worship is a very important part of the life of the school and the policy practice reflects and reinforces many of the school's aims. Based on the belief that each child is unique and made by God, our mission statement places the development of the individual and their uniqueness at the heart of our work. Other common strands are:

- Care and support
- Respect and responsibility
- Reflective growth in self-development and self esteem
- Relationships
- Spiritual, Cultural, Social and Moral development

Whilst Acts of Collective Worship are planned to be inclusive, in line with the Church of England Foundation, Collective Acts of Worship will be distinctively Christian in character and incorporate some elements of the Anglican faith.

Aims

Through Collective Worship at Bishop Henderson Church of England Primary School we aim to:

- Provide opportunities for worshipping God, reverence, thanksgiving, celebration and reflection;
- Help convey the sense of value and worth Jesus gave to everyone and to reflect that in the ethos of the school;
- Enable pupils to reflect on Christian and other worthwhile values and beliefs, encouraging:
 - A positive and responsible attitude to the environment
 - A quest for honesty, integrity, truth and justice
 - Love and respect for self and the other person

- Service to others and to the community
- Introduce, make use of and teach reverence and respect for some of the elements, symbols and traditions of the Christian and in particular Church of England Faith e.g. the Bible, the Lord's Prayer, Candles, The Vicar, The Church and its many parts;
- Contribute to pupils' spiritual development by providing opportunities to:
 - Reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things.
 - Experience times of quiet inactivity to counterbalance the activity, which generally marks the rest of the day.
 - Hear stories and words from religious and other literature, which suggests that there is more to life than meets the eye.
 - Experience awe and wonder at the beauty, mystery and power of the world.
- Contribute to the pupils' moral development by providing opportunities to:
 - Reflect on matters concerning right and wrong.
 - Hear about incidents in which, and people in whom goodness or right are exemplified.
 - Learn about religion and other teaching concerning right and wrong.
- Contribute to pupil's social development by providing opportunities to
 - Gather with others for a common purpose and to celebrate shared values of the school community.
 - Enable staff, pupils and members of the wider community to contribute to the life of the school.
 - Reflect upon human feelings and experiences, both positive and negative such as compassion, creativity, courage, respect, kindness, responsibility, love, hope, friendship, acceptance, fear, and forgiveness.
 - Learn how to behave appropriately within a specific social setting.
 - Develop self-confidence in public speaking/performance.
- Contribute to pupils' cultural development by providing opportunities to
 - Hear music from a range of times, places and cultures.
 - Reflect upon ideas concerning beauty and that which is pleasing to the eye and ear.
 - Appreciate the range of talents and gifts found in the school community and beyond.
- Contribute to pupils' intellectual development by providing opportunities for:
 - Open ended questioning.
 - Learning to engage with their minds.
 - Thinking about something more than the obvious.
- Provide a worthwhile educational experience, which takes account of pupils' age, aptitude and family background.
- Provide a worship experience that does not offend the integrity of the nonreligious and those of different faiths who may be participating.

- Fulfil statutory requirements.

Legal requirements – Our response

In line with the 1996 Education Act there will be a short daily act of worship, which will include all children (except those withdrawn by parental request). A specific time each day is set-aside for Collective Worship

As a Church of England School, the Collective Worship provided will reflect our Foundation and be distinctively Christian. The traditions of Christian belief and the Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ will form the major focus of our worship.

Through staff meetings and guidelines for visitors the requirements concerning traditions and practice will be explained to everyone involved in the planning and delivery of acts of worship.

All staff will be invited to contribute regularly to acts of worship but will not be compromised by being asked to lead an assembly if they find the content contrary to their own belief. Care will be taken when recruiting staff to emphasise the school's Church of England status.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship. Teachers have the same rights. If a parent/teacher so wishes he/she must inform the Headteacher. If, after consultation the parent/teacher still wishes to exercise this right, alternative arrangements will be made for the child, and adequate supervision will be provided.

Organisation of Collective Worship

The programme of acts of collective worship is co-ordinated by the Headteacher. In planning the programme four main aspects of collective worship are considered:

- Content
- Atmosphere
- Reflection
- Participation

The themes chosen for collective worship reflect the schools' Christian Values of Courage, Compassion and Creativity. British Values are also taught through collective worship, with a different theme being selected for each half term. Content may be selected from a faith base; shared human experience of special issues e.g. an occurrence in school. The main Christian festivals are celebrated every year. All teaching staff may take a turn in leading the assemblies, following the agreed programme.

There are daily whole school collective worships 4 days a week and one class collective worship each week. On Friday the achievements of pupils of the school are celebrated and time is given to reflect on our skills and talents and to think about other people. Awards are given to children that have shown courage, compassion or creativity.

Church and Family Collective Worship

Where possible Acts of Worship are held in Holy Trinity Church as well as at the school. Over the year, each class will deliver a collective worship to celebrate or share aspects of their class life or a theme chosen by the class that they wish to share with the school.

Delivering the Programme

Worship will usually consist of:

- Collective Worship Team, comprising of representatives from each class, will light the candles to prepare for worship.
- Opening music to signify gathering as a preparation for worship.
- Short talk for engagement: may include a reading from the Bible, a story or poem, drama (spontaneous or rehearsed), music or video recording, or time for thinking and time for sharing.
- Prayer to respond: A time for stillness and quiet reflection which may include closing eyes, using objects or art as a focus, a guided story, a focused silence, a piece of music or lighting a candle. It will be with word or silent, accessible to all, with appropriate rituals e.g. not always hands together eyes closed. This is often led by members of the Collective Worship Team.
- Leaving Together: a clear ending such as the School Prayer.

In delivering the programme care will be taken to ensure there is the opportunity for personal engagement and response with maximum participation by all those present, allowing for a range of responses and feedback. Children's own thoughts, experiences, stories and prayers will be used regularly to enhance worship.

A range of responses to worship will be encouraged, including:

- Awareness of
- Appreciation of
- Respect for
- Preference for
- Commitment to
- Devotion to
- Adoration of

This will ensure that children are not compelled to respond in a particular way but are offered opportunities to:

- Reflect on the meaning and purpose of life.
- Ponder ultimate questions.
- Develop a sense of transcendence.
- Respond to challenge.
- Experience exploration of a religious idea.
- Celebrate learning about religion.
- Learn from the experience of others.

There should be no attempt at eliciting acts of assent or a corporate public response. Children's responses are private, conditional and may well be reflective in nature and certainly open to subsequent review. Therefore, it is important not to put pressure on children. Language should be used carefully, for example, rather than "we believe ..." to use the phrase "Christians believe...", "I would like you to listen to some words which are very special to Christians". Occasionally materials or examples from other faiths are used to illustrate a theme in assembly. When this happens care should be taken to put them into context, for example "This is a prayer that Hindus use to"

There are many values and beliefs, which are part of the broad traditions of Christian beliefs, which are also held by society at large, e.g. a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world, the merits of

sacrificial love, such values should be explored and celebrated in school worship in a manner which complements the way they are taught in the classroom and communicated through the ethos of the school.

Visitors

Visitors should understand the educational aims of collective worship at the school and the need to avoid any proselytising. Guidelines will be given to visitors before they lead an act of collective worship, and members of the community involved on a regular basis with the assembly programme will be asked to read this policy.

Community Involvement in Collective Worship

The Headteacher, class teachers, the vicar of Holy Trinity Church, church representatives and Governors are involved on a regular basis with the Collective Worship Programme.

Monitoring and evaluation

Records are kept of planned themes, assemblies delivered and staff involved. Staff and pupil feedback and the Governors' monitoring sheet are used to monitor Collective Worship. The success and value of the programme is discussed at termly staff meeting and future programmes are planned.