



OFFENHAM C.E. FIRST SCHOOL
Growing deep roots. Producing good fruit

POLICY FOR WORSHIP AND ASSEMBLY

Legal Framework

There must be a daily act of Collective Worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective Worship in a Church of England school must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words, the law on Collective Worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in Offenham CE First School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

Vision

Our school vision, summed up by the following three words, “Love, transformation and growth” plays a significant role in our collective attitude to worship. We wish to inspire pupils and promote excellence, honesty, enjoyment of and opportunities for reflection in our acts of worship. We offer all pupils equal access to every assembly time so that all can be daily transformed, flourish and grow into their full God-given potential.

We are building a school community where everyone is committed to the ongoing pursuit of excellence – a place where, through the joy and hope of the resurrection there is transformation, growth and progress in children’s social, moral, spiritual, cultural and academic lives.

Our Root values can be seen in action across our school life together. We desire for all of our children to develop deep roots so that they are resilient, able to flourish and produce abundant fruit in their own lives and to serve the common good. Galatians 5:22 refers to the fruits as the visible signs of growth and transformation.

School statement on Collective worship

Building on the themes mentioned above, Collective Worship plays a very central and important role in the life of our school and the daily transformation that we desire.

It is an opportunity to celebrate all aspects of school life, to support our curriculum and to provide a time for stillness and reflection in what is often a very busy, active day for our children. Collective Worship is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

Offenham School is a Church of England School and maintains strong links with both the Church and the village community with the School visiting the church to attend and lead services there.

Collective Worship at the School has, by law, to be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. In the absence of a Trust Deed, Worship should be in accordance with the beliefs of the Church of England. As the Trust Deed at Offenham has been lost in time, the latter governs Worship at the School.

THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

The purpose of a Church School is to ensure that Christian education is available to all parents who wish it for their children. Offenham Church of England School promotes and encourages values and beliefs in partnership with the Church, while providing a welcoming, secure and caring environment for children of all faiths and of none.

OUR AIMS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Collective Worship is pivotal to the life of the school and as such it encompasses all that we do and supports the outworking of our school vision.

Therefore, at its heart, Collective Worship at Offenham School strives to follow the following principles:

It is invitational

Acts of Collective Worship will:

- nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in everyone through working for social justice
- encourage pupils to consider the needs of others through charitable service and courageous advocacy
- nurture reflection, stillness, meditation and prayer
- provide pupils with (age appropriate) opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives through music, images and words
- provide a sense of occasion that is separate from the rest of the school day
- foster an appreciation of the natural world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it
- develop clear partnerships between worship in the school and the wider community.

It is inclusive

Our understanding of Christianity is that it is an inclusive faith which mirrors the attitude of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. Thus, we welcome children and staff of all faiths to our worship.

Through their Christian character our acts of Collective Worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, lifestyles and faiths which exist in our school and local community
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe
- be appropriate for every student to attend
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils
- foster active roles of pupils, parents and members of the local community – in preparation, participation and leadership
- provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.

It is inspiring

Our acts of collective worship provide wider opportunities to:

- promote wide ownership of our Christian vision
- assist learners to have increased awareness and to reflect upon fundamental issues about life
- enhance, complement and extend curricular work
- develop learners' understanding of the Christian faith and Church (Anglican) practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content, including sharing the Eucharist which takes place termly. The celebration of Eucharist is led by a member of the clergy and is open to our whole school community.
- encounter and explore Jesus's teachings and the Trinitarian nature of Christian faith
- provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity
- identify opportunities for Christian celebration which can be associated with other school events
- include appropriate references to and elements of other faiths and secular worldviews
- include opportunities to celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of pupils
- ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to ensure that children have a clear understanding of how the teachings of Jesus impact what we do locally, nationally and globally.

Therefore, we will ensure that:

- a range of people are involved in leading worship, including learners
- opportunities are offered to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship
- the timetabling of acts of worship includes the use of the local church and various groupings of pupils

- worship is planned in relation to our distinctive Christian vision and associate roots and fruits
- worship is regularly evaluated by a range of members of the school community
- opportunities for worship / prayer are offered throughout the day.

Pattern of Collective Worship

Our regular pattern of worship ensures that children experience worship from a range a different leaders and viewpoints, whilst maintaining the integrity of Anglican Liturgy.

Planning, Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

Planning

- A termly overview for worship is planned each term in conjunction with SLT, Collective Worship Leader and local clergy.
- Collective Worship is planned using the church calendar and the calendars of other faiths.
- A clear liturgy is followed for each act of Collective Worship.
- For each act of Collective Worship, a Bible reading, song and prayer are carefully planned to link with the theme of worship.
- A time of reflection is planned as part of the worship.
- Each Monday we have a Songs of praise, Liturgy and WOW linked to a scientist or something with a science focus - Wow or ow in current affairs – inspiring a sense of awe and wonder in all who attend
- Tuesday to Thursday – CW is in accordance with the half termly/termly theme. Friday is our Celebration assembly.
- There is a carefully planned programme of music that the children listen to on entry and exit (taken from the model music policy). Giving them a wide range of music to appreciate.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of Collective Worship is monitored within our regular monitoring cycle

- Collective Worship is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team, Foundation Governors and pupils and staff who attend Collective Worship. All of this ensures that Collective Worship remains invitational, inclusive and inspiring.
- All monitoring for Collective Worship is completed on a monitoring form which is kept by the Collective Worship Lead.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Academy Board should:

- provide a statement within the school prospectus which makes clear that the aims of Collective Worship within the school are based on its Christian foundation and includes parents' legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship
- ensure that the school fulfills its legal responsibility for Collective Worship
- in conjunction with the Headteacher, monitor the effectiveness of Collective Worship within the school and make recommendations for its development in accordance with the SIAMS Schedule.

The Headteacher / Collective Worship Lead should:

- co-ordinate timetabling and themes across the year into long, medium and short-term planning, in conjunction with the school and church community
- ensure that the school prospectus, welcome / induction pack and website have clear statements about the school's ethos for Collective Worship, (including the right of withdrawal)
- ensure that there is a balance of regular and on-off visitors during the year, and being a point of contact for those visitors so that they understand their contribution to the worship life of the school
- organise the evaluation of Collective Worship
- be a part of the SIAMS inspection process
- support other members of staff
- know where to go for good resources to support worship
- lead staff meetings that have a focus on Collective Worship
- be responsible for leading school worship teams, or prayer & reflection spaces.

The SMSC Pupil Team should:

- help plan and lead Collective Worship

- suggest new ideas for Collective Worship
- contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship in the school
- promote Collective Worship within the school.

Staff should:

- support the crucial role that Collective Worship plays within the school
- plan and lead Collective Worship when required
- provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on worship at other times during the week.

Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. This support is provided by Diocese of Worcester Education Team. Needs for staff training may be identified through regular subject leader audits as well as performance management cycles. Additionally, support and guidance are provided for visitors and the clergy who lead Collective Worship.

The Right of Withdrawal from Collective Worship

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from Collective Worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

At Offenham CE First School there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view.

On occasion, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- the practical implications of withdrawal
- whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much.

Where parents have withdrawn their children from Collective Worship and request religious worship according to their faith or denomination, the governors and Headteacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- that the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts.

If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply (this means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily Collective Worship.)

Review

This policy will be subject to the normal cycle of policy review and will be reviewed and ratified by the Governing Body annually. Furthermore, there may be occasions where this policy is reviewed outside the normal review cycle, including but not limited to:

- a change in the SIAMS Schedule for Inspections
- a change in legal position framework for Collective Worship.

This policy was reviewed in September 2023 by the staff and governors at Offenham CE First school.

Date of next review: Autumn 2025

