Living and learning together with God

St Nicolas' CE School Taplow

Collective Worship Policy

Policy Date: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027

Headteacher: Rebecca Holmes
Collective Worship Leader: Jenny Dobson
Governor Responsible: Rev Jane Cresswell

Our School Vision

"Jesus said, 'I am the vine and you are the branches.'" (John 15:5)

At St Nicolas' CE Combined School, our school is rooted in the Christian faith. Nourished by God, we grow together, drawing on His strength to live out our Christian values so that we can reach out to others in our community.

We are all unique and, together with God, we want to be the best that we can be. As we learn together in a supportive and nurturing school, we will thrive and be ready to face the challenges of life.

Collective worship is central to this vision and underpins the spiritual life of our school community. It provides opportunities for everyone to reflect on our values, celebrate achievements, develop spiritually, and grow together as a community.

Introduction

Collective worship, which we also call 'assembly', is the heartbeat of life at St Nicolas' CE Combined School. As a Church of England school, worship is a valued and special time when pupils and adults come together to explore faith, reflect on the Christian vision of the school and consider how this influences our lives and relationships.

At St Nicolas', collective worship is planned and delivered in line with the Church of England's vision that worship should be:

Inclusive

Worship is accessible and meaningful for everyone. It recognises and values the backgrounds, experiences, beliefs and journeys of all members of our school community. Pupils and adults are encouraged to engage in ways that are personally meaningful and appropriate for them.

Invitational

Collective worship welcomes participation but never demands it. Children and adults are invited to pray if they wish and are always offered opportunities for quiet reflection. No one is expected to make a declaration of faith. Worship enables everyone to engage with integrity and respect for their own beliefs and experiences.

Inspiring

Worship encourages reflection on life's big questions and inspires children and adults to live out our Christian values through love and friendship, respect, courage, honesty, thankfulness and peace. Worship encourages all members of our community to become courageous advocates who make a positive difference in the world.

Legal Context

As a Church of England school, collective worship is provided in accordance with the school's Trust Deed and reflects the Anglican foundation of the school. Worship draws upon the rich traditions of Christian faith and practice within the Church of England whilst remaining inclusive and accessible to all members of our community.

Collective worship:
- Is provided daily through a combination of whole school and class worship
- Reflects the Christian foundation and Anglican heritage of the school
- Supports the school's Christian vision and values
- Provides opportunities for prayer, reflection, stillness and spiritual development
- Enables pupils and adults to encounter Christian faith and practice in meaningful ways

Parents retain the legal right to withdraw their child from collective worship. Procedures for withdrawal are outlined later in this policy.

Aims of Collective Worship

Through collective worship we aim to:
- Explore and reinforce our Christian vision
- Deepen understanding of Christian beliefs, values and traditions
- Deepen understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Enable pupils and adults to encounter faith through worship, prayer and reflection
- Provide regular opportunities for stillness, reflection and personal spiritual response
- Develop spiritual awareness and understanding
- Encourage respect, compassion, honesty, courage, peace and thankfulness
- Help pupils appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world
- Foster a strong sense of belonging and community
- Encourage pupils to become courageous advocates for positive change
- Strengthen partnerships between school, church, home and the wider community
- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship.

Content of Collective Worship

Over the course of the year, collective worship may include:
- Bible stories and teachings
- The life and teachings of Jesus
- Christian values and virtues
- Reflection on our school vision
- Prayer, stillness and reflection
- Christian hymns and worship songs
- Seasons and festivals of the Church year
- Stories from other faith traditions where appropriate
- Children's achievements and contributions
- Local, national and global events
- Opportunities for social action and service

Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils to think deeply, ask questions, and consider their own beliefs, values and responsibilities

Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective worship takes place in a variety of settings including:

- School hall
- Classrooms
- Outdoor areas
- Reflection spaces
- St Nicolas' Church

Acts of worship generally follow a recognisable structure:

Gathering

Children and adults gather and prepare for worship through music, silence, visual prompts, greetings or liturgical responses.

Engaging

A Bible passage, story, image, discussion, drama, music or reflection introduces the theme.

Responding

Children are invited to respond through prayer, reflection, discussion, writing, artwork, or other meaningful activities.

Sending

Worship concludes with a challenge, blessing, prayer or reflection to carry into daily life.

Pattern of Worship

Collective worship is provided daily through a combination of whole school and class worship.
The format and leadership of worship may vary throughout the year in response to:

- The Church calendar
- School priorities and pupil need
- Special events and celebrations
- Opportunities for pupil leadership
- Partnerships with church and community groups

Collective Worship in Church

Throughout the year, special acts of worship are held at St Nicolas' Church, including:

- Harvest Festival
- Advent and Christmas celebrations
- Easter services
- Pentecost
- St Nicolas' Day
- Leavers' Service

Parents, governors, parish representatives and members of the wider community are invited to join many of these occasions.

EYFS

In their first term, our reception children have collective worship in class. We introduce them to whole school collective worship progressively during the autumn and spring terms, as appropriate to the readiness of the cohort.

Growing Faith

At St Nicolas', we recognise the importance of partnership between school, church and home. Through collective worship we seek to strengthen these relationships and provide opportunities for children and families to explore faith, spirituality and life's big questions together.
We value our close relationship with St Nicolas' Church and seek to develop meaningful connections between worship in school, worship in church and conversations about faith within families.
This reflects the Church of England's vision for Growing Faith and supports the flourishing of the whole school community.

Prayer and Reflection

Prayer forms an important part of school life.
Children are encouraged to:
• Listen to and experience prayer
• Write and share their own prayers
• Use classroom reflection areas
• Participate in prayer activities
• Reflect during moments of stillness
Every act of collective worship includes opportunities for stillness, reflection and personal response. Children are encouraged to use these moments in ways that are meaningful to them, whether through prayer, contemplation or quiet reflection
All prayers are offered as invitations. Children who choose not to participate in prayer are encouraged to use these times for personal reflection

Spiritual Development

Collective worship makes a significant contribution to the spiritual development of pupils and adults.
Opportunities include:
• Experiencing awe and wonder
• Exploring personal beliefs and values
• Reflecting on life's big questions
• Appreciating beauty, creativity and nature
• Developing gratitude, hope and resilience
• Considering issues of justice and responsibility
• Reflecting on relationships, community and service
Collective worship provides opportunities for children and adults to encounter faith, reflect on their own beliefs and values, and explore life's big questions. Through prayer, scripture, music, stillness and reflection, pupils are encouraged to develop spiritually and to understand how faith may influence the choices they make and the way they live their lives.

Pupil Leadership

Pupils play an active role in shaping worship.
The RE Team:
• Leads prayers and reflections
• Assists with selecting music
• Supports worship delivery
• Evaluates worship
• Gathers pupil voice
• Supports the development of reflection spaces
Through these opportunities, pupils develop confidence, leadership skills and a deeper understanding of worship.

Inclusion

Collective worship is designed to ensure all pupils feel welcomed, valued and respected.
We:
• Respect all faiths and worldviews
• Use language that is welcoming and accessible
• Ensure pupils of all backgrounds can participate with integrity
• Make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND
• Encourage thoughtful participation and discussion
Whilst worship is clearly Christian and reflects the Anglican foundation of the school, it is never coercive or indoctrinatory. Participation in prayer is always invitational.

Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure statutory requirements are met
- Lead the strategic development of collective worship
- Support staff in planning and leading worship
- Monitor quality and impact
- Report appropriately to governors.

Staff
Staff will:
- Lead collective worship
- Support pupil involvement
- Model respectful participation
- Contribute to evaluation and improvement.

Governors
Governors will:
- Monitor collective worship provision
- Ensure statutory responsibilities are met
- Receive regular updates regarding quality and impact
- Support ongoing development and SIAMS readiness.

Clergy and Church Representatives
Church representatives will:
- Lead worship where appropriate
- Support planning and delivery
- Maintain strong links between school and church
- Contribute to evaluation and development.

Monitoring and Evaluation
Collective worship is monitored through:

- Pupil voice
- Staff reflection
- Governor visits
- Feedback from clergy
- Parent feedback where appropriate.

Evaluation findings are shared with governors and contribute to collective worship development planning and the school's SIAMS self-evaluation cycle

Right of Withdrawal
Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from collective worship
Parents considering withdrawal are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Headteacher so that the nature and purpose of collective worship can be fully explained
Appropriate alternative supervision arrangements will be provided for pupils who are withdrawn

Linked Policies
- Religious Education Policy
- Spirituality Document
- SIAMS Self-Evaluation Framework
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Policy
- SEND Policy
- Child Protection Policy

Policy Status: This policy reflects current Church of England guidance that collective worship in church schools should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring and supports ongoing SIAMS self-evaluation and school improvement.