



St Matthew's CE Primary School Collective Worship Policy

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Approval

Signed by Chair of Directors	
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1 Introduction

St Matthew's CE Primary School is part of Frays Academy Trust. We believe that nurturing the whole child—academically, emotionally, morally, and spiritually—is a sacred responsibility. Rooted in the message of Proverbs 22:6, we are committed to guiding each child on a lifelong journey of growth, faith, and purpose. As a family of Church of England schools supported by the London Diocesan Board for Schools and Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, we view spiritual development not as an add-on, but as foundational to shaping resilient, reflective, and compassionate young people.

Collective Worship is an incredibly important part of pupil and staff well-being and our spiritual development as human beings. We believe that the heart of Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils and staff and others such as Directors, Governors and parents, to come together, to sing and pray, to share and communicate their feelings with one another and to God. It takes us beyond ourselves towards an encounter with the living God; this can be an exciting time for all of us.

For our church schools, Collective Worship, is distinctly Christian in nature, while being delivered in a way that is also inclusive of all who attend. Collective worship, therefore, provides the school community with the opportunity to:

- Worship God
- Consider spiritual and moral issues
- Explore beliefs
- Encourage participation and response
- Develop community spirit
- Promote common ethos and shared values
- Reinforce positive attitudes

2 School Vision and Values

The Church of England's document, 'Valuing All God's Children' states: 'A Church school's vision will be a Christian and inclusive vision, where all members of the school community are afforded a sense of their own dignity and worth and the innate dignity of humankind is cherished. Inclusivity and hospitality will be hallmarks of church schools, where everyone is revered and respected as a member of a community where all are known and loved by God.'

Our school's Christian vision shapes our approach to collective worship by reminding us that God has a hopeful and purposeful plan for every child. In worship, we create space for pupils and staff to reflect on God's promises, to grow in faith, and to develop resilience and hope for the future. Through prayer, song, and biblical teaching, our worship nurtures a sense of belonging, encourages spiritual flourishing, and equips our community to live with confidence, compassion, and trust in God's guidance.

This is underpinned by the key Biblical passages we have chosen for our school:

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Everyone will be treated with dignity as all people are made in the image of God and loved equally by God.

3 Aims of Collective Worship

- To offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- To 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.
- To reflect the parish tradition of worship, while giving experience over time for pupils to experience the breadth of Anglicanism.
- To 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 and festivals.
- Explore the school's Christian vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues.
- Enable pupils the opportunity to make a positive contribution to worship through involvement with aspects of the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship.

4 Legislative Basis

Collective worship:

- Should be conducted in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school and Instrument of Government and be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- Unless the right of withdrawal has been exercised, all pupils must take part each day in an act of collective worship (DfE circular 1/94 para. 51) and the Local Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage in a distinctively Christian act of worship.
- Arrangements for collective worship in foundation schools of a religious character (i.e. church schools) are the responsibility of the Local Governing Body, after consultation with the headteacher (DfE Circular 1/94 para 52&53).

5 Planning of Worship

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, the incumbent of our linked church/es and external visitors in consultation with the school's collective worship leader and governors.

The daily Christian act of worship is central to our Christian ethos. It makes an important contribution to the spiritual flourishing of the whole school community. We are committed to providing a daily act of Christian worship which is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifies the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school or key stage. Our school plans systematically, using both long-term and short-term plans which enables continuity and cohesion. We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles, and our planning incorporates a range of creative opportunities to enable all to engage in the acts of worship. These include, for example, music, silence, symbolism, drama, digital resources.

When planning acts of worship, we follow the Church of England guidance to ensure that worship is:

- 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 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.

6 Pattern of Worship

This school will hold an act of collective worship every day. During collective worship, whether in the hall, classroom or outside, we will apply the following ‘central attributes’ of worship:

- **Gathering** Making special and significant this part of the day through appropriate symbol and ceremony
- **Engaging** Using the best available techniques to stimulate interest in the content
- **Responding** Ensuring there is time and opportunity for individual, group reflection and thought, so those attending can respond in a variety of ways
- **Sending** Summarising the worship in a meaningful short message used to create an opportunity for those attending to implement the ideas covered and to conclude the worship

7 The Centrality of Prayer

During the collective worship there will be a time for response and reflection, to ponder on a question, statement or thought. This may also be reflected in a prayer, offered spontaneously by a pupil or adult, read out or recited. The school’s approach to prayer is invitational and inclusive. During prayer, children are invited to take a moment of quiet reflection in a way that feels appropriate to them and/or make the prayer their own by saying Amen at the end.

Prayer at St Matthew’s reinforces:

- Children understanding the nature and purpose of prayer.
- Children understanding the part prayer may play in their lives and the life of the school community.
- That prayer contributes to the spiritual development of individuals and the whole school community.

There will also be appropriate opportunities for prayer and other worship activities, including reflection, outside of collective worship.

8 Management and Organisation

At least once a week, schools will lead Praise and Worship. In addition, there will be a weekly act of Worship that includes a member of the clergy and at least a termly an opportunity for a class Worship to invite parents to attend.

The acts of worship take place daily and are led mainly by the Headteacher, although other visitors, class groups or members of staff may also lead worship. Worship is systematically planned so that there is continuity, variety and a focus on Christian beliefs and festivals. It is within broad themes set for the year, but with the flexibility to respond to national or local issues in so much as they affect the school community.

Our approach to worship is:

Monday	Praise and worship led by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
Tuesday	Praise and worship led by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher
Wednesday	Whole School Church Worship - This will be in St Matthew’s Church. - This will be led by the clergy, St Matthew’s Church Leadership Team, or sometimes using visitors from other local churches.

Thursday	Worship led by Phase Leaders or teachers
Friday	Teacher led worship or Class-led Worship - classes will lead this on a termly rota and parents will be invited.

Music will play an important part of our worship. Songs and Hymns, traditional and modern, contemporary and child-friendly will be used to enhance the worship experience in school and in church. Quiet reflective music will be used on entrance and exit, and this will vary in its type to broaden experiences.

All Worship that is undertaken will be planned ahead and documented. Content is monitored to ensure that the 'distinctly Christian' nature is maintained. All Acts of Worship should include a time for prayer and reflection, and this should also be carefully planned. Worship themes follow an annual development plan, which is embedded with the school's Christian values.

8.1 Collective Worship Leader

The leader for collective worship, a member of the school senior leadership team, is responsible for long term planning of worship, leading acts of worship and supporting staff and pupils who are planning and leading aspects of worship. The leader also monitors the quality of worship and evaluates its impact across the school community.

8.2 Visitors Leading Worship

Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our Child Protection Policy which can be found on our school website. This should include discussing the content of any worship with the Headteacher or a nominated member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors will never be left alone with children, and the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

It is the responsibility of the collective worship leader and Headteacher to ensure that all visitors, who are leading worship in school, will be trained and properly briefed about the school, its context and our school's vision.

Our schools will make appropriate checks and engage with visitors to make sure that their approach is suitable and it and the resources they intend to use as age appropriate and in line with pupils' developmental stage. We will only invite visitors where we have full confidence in their approach and any resources they use and that this meets the intended outcome of the relevant part of the collective worship plan.

8.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact they have on pupils and adults within the school community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, the collective worship leader and governors and takes place both informally and formally.

This process supports each school's self-evaluation, is a specific responsibility of the foundation governors. Foundation governors and the worship leader will observe and evaluate worship at least once every year and report back to the Local Governing Body. This will be reported as part of the Local Governing Body's standing agenda item on the Christian Distinctiveness of the school. The Board of Directors will approve this policy. On behalf of the Board, the CEO will undertake an annual evaluation with school leaders on the quality and impact of the school's acts of collective worship.

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

Pupils are also involved in evaluating collective worship through pupil voice. All leaders of collective worship contribute to our ongoing monitoring and evaluation in order to improve their practice and impact with the children.

8.4 Worship in Early Years

Children in EYFS initially carry out daily worship in their classrooms lead by the class teacher which is adapted from the whole school worship. They will then transition into the whole school worship when appropriate. In addition, the children have a time of reflection and prayer at the end of each day.

8.5 Special educational needs and disability

We ensure that collective worship is inclusive and meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Collective worship will be delivered to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the content. Worship leaders will take note of the content to ensure that the content is suitable, particularly for children with education health care plans (ECHPs).

9 Parents and Carers

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents and carers is essential to help pupils flourish. Worship is regarded as 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.

9.1 Withdrawal from Collective Worship

We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship, However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school and the Trust, we hope that all pupils will participate in collective worship, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child will discuss this with the Headteacher before making their decision. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw pupils from worship must be done in writing to the Headteacher.

10 CPD and training

Parents, pupils and adults in school are entitled to be led in Christian worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a church school context. Therefore, all those leading worship will have access to regular Diocesan led training.