

# Collective Worship Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Park Street Church of England Primary School is a school with a Christian character and seeks to ensure that all who learn and work within the school are enabled to experience 'life in all its fullness' [Jn 10.10] - to be people 'fully alive' [St Irenaeus].

To this end, all of our work, our policies and our procedures seek to ensure that we honour God, love our neighbour as ourselves, do to others as we would have them do to us, we don't judge others, and we seek to be good stewards of God's creation. These basic tenets of our Christian faith inform our values of "Honesty and Respect, Friendship and Kindness, Learning and Fun."

Religious Education plays an important role in our school, as part of a wider commitment to our values as a Church of England school. We believe strongly in the unique value of each member of our school community and seek to reflect this in how we explore theological and philosophical questions in our RE lessons.

As part of an international city in a diverse society, we recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome this diversity and intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child. Furthermore, we are committed to helping children develop the knowledge and spiritual understanding necessary to know themselves, and to build a sympathetic awareness of the needs and beliefs of others. We are glad to have the active support of members of local faith communities while we seek to achieve this vision.

As such, we view the context of our school through the metaphor of the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13):

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. 32 Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

We highlight to our pupils that as they go out into the world, they will have opportunities to significantly affect it by living out our values, remembering that small acts of kindness and respect can greatly influence others.

There is a legal requirement for Collective Worship to take place in the school every day, but the school's desire for Collective Worship stretches beyond the demands of the law and touches its fundamental purpose as a school. Our daily act of worship is an opportunity to build the school together in faith, hope and love.

Each act of worship should involve all members of the school community. Bearing in mind that pupils and their families come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures and faiths, and religious traditions, worship should be inclusive and not confessional or evangelistic. All staff should attend with their specific cohorts, and governors should make an effort to attend as often as they can. Each act of worship should be carefully prepared and follow an agreed programme.

The school will loyally and joyfully follow its Christian tradition in offering worship primarily Christian in character.

Collective Worship plays a central rôle in a Church School; it models the school's Christian ethos and values, and it proclaims its Church School identity.

## 2. Context

Park Street C of E Primary School is situated in the centre of Cambridge, nestled amongst the most historic and prestigious colleges and theological institutions of Cambridge University.

Its geographical location means that we have the benefit of welcoming many children of visiting families from diverse nations and backgrounds, sometimes for just a short period of time.

These children become part of our 'family'; our aspiration for them is the same as for our long-term residents, to send them out into the world as curious, creative, flourishing learners, whose experience of our school and its curriculum will have shaped them in understanding, virtues and habits, so that they can make the most life 'in all its fullness' (John 10.10).

Our curriculum has been designed in sympathy with the Church of England Vision for Education (2016), 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'. We work together to ensure that all Park Street children:

*"...discover an education that embraces excellence and academic rigour within the wider framework of spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development which enables their children to flourish..."*

*"Our school is hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings. It invites collaboration, alliances, negotiation of differences...in order to serve the flourishing of a healthily plural society and democracy"*

This means that all who seek safe haven within our learning and wider community should and must be treated with the dignity and respect that all who are created in God's image should expect. We seek to be inclusive in practice and policy and that those who may be differently able are enabled to access the physical building, the curricular and the extra-curricular, and that reasonable adjustments are made to meet their specific needs and to mitigate the obstacles they may encounter, so that they are able to feel they are an integral part of a community that shines as a beacon of Christian welcome and hospitality.

## 3. Aims

### **Inclusive – Invitational - Inspirational**

The aims of Collective Worship are:

- to worship God, using music, singing, and sometimes silence;
- to reflect on and discuss together the values taught by the Christian and other faith traditions;
- to develop a spirit of community, a common ethos and shared values;
- to become aware of spiritual and moral issues;
- to encourage a sense of awe and wonder at the world around;
- To be courageous advocates for those who need advocacy in all its forms
- to provide opportunities for celebration and thanksgiving.

This can be achieved in various ways:

- Providing an opportunity for the children to reflect upon God and to give Him honour.
- Helping children discover their place in the world.
- Highlighting the spiritual dimension through experiencing worship, and giving children the vocabulary for discussing their feelings about this, and how it affects them 'inwards, outwards and upwards'.
- Providing children with a vocabulary of worship and an experience of a wide variety of worship forms, including symbols and imagery.
- Providing an opportunity to celebrate major, and some minor, Christian festivals.
- Heightening awareness of the ultimate questions / realities of life and to provide the opportunity to reflect upon these. To support the search for meaning.
- Enabling children to appreciate their worth and value to God, and to the community, and to respect the integrity of all individuals as a child of God
- Enabling pupils to make effective use of silence in opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation and prayer.
- Celebrating gifts, talents and achievements.
- Establishing, exploring, and reinforcing the common Christian values of the school community such as love, peace, kindness, compassion.
- Fostering a feeling of community and belonging in the school through a sharing of experiences and feelings.
- Developing personal relationships and to encourage social development.
- Providing an opportunity to empathise with the needs of others.
- Providing an opportunity for children to become acquainted with people from the local and wider community, particularly the local church.
- Encouraging respect and care for God's creation by a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues.
- Fostering feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy.
- Giving memorable and enjoyable experiences.
- Providing an opportunity to bring before God in prayer personal needs and those of others.
- Sharing with participants some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level, and thereby giving them the encouragement to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework.
- Exploring the ideas of other faiths to establish where we share similar aspects of belief and that promotes greater respect and understanding between people of different faiths and none.

## 4. Legal Framework

There must be a daily act of Collective Worship for all pupils which takes account of their age and aptitude (Section 70 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998).

It is recognised that parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from acts of worship in the school. Parents are asked to discuss this matter with the Headteacher in the first instance. The duties and responsibilities of the Case Manager are as described in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part four: Allegations made against/concerns raised in relation to teachers and other staff

## 5. Planning

The Headteacher is responsible for planning Acts of Worship and liaising with visitors.

Each Act of Worship at the school should last for 15-20 minutes.

Acts of worship in school will familiarise pupils with liturgy: a table covered with an altar cloth, the lighting of candles, the use of a cross and an open Bible, the learning of the Lord's Prayer and the enjoyment of hymns and songs.

When planning Collective Worship, the following may be used:

- The Bible (as a source book or as inspiration for themes and stories)
- The cycle of the Church Year (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saints' Days)
- Learning and saying traditional prayers, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the Grace
- Singing a wide variety of hymns, from traditional to contemporary
- Christian symbols of worship with reflection on their meaning (e.g. cross, crucifix, bread and wine)
- Prayer, silence and reflection
- Psalms with simple responses

Where practical, the week's acts of Collective Worship should be as follows. What happens on each day is at the Headteacher's discretion dependent on availability of clergy and the school hall.

- Key Stages led by relevant staff
- Whole School Singing led by the Headteacher and Music co-ordinator
- Classes led by Class Teachers
- Whole School led by Clergy from St Clement's, our parish church, and from other churches in Cambridge
- Whole School Celebration led by the Headteacher

The school is supported by St Clement's Church, Cambridge, and has extensive links with Great St Mary's, Cambridge, and from Holy Trinity, Cambridge. Christian festivals and significant times in the school year may be celebrated at the church. These include Christmas, Easter, Harvest Festival and Leavers' Day. Members of the clergy will regularly visit the school and lead Collective Worship.

## **6. Recording**

A record is kept by the Headteacher of each term's planned Collective Worship themes.

## **7. Reading**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collective-worship-in-schools>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/collective-worship-guidance-18052021.pdf>