

**“I came that they may have life, life in all its fullness.”
John 10:10**

Opportunity Fulfilment Service



Collective Worship Policy

Approved By: Quality of Education Committee (Based on the St Alban's Diocese Model)

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Person Responsible: Michelle Boylan, Headteacher

Our Vision

**“I came that they may have life, life in all its fullness”.
John 10:10**

Our vision for our school is built on this quotation from the Gospel of John.

At St John’s Church of England Primary School, Lemsford we are striving to be a community in which everyone is enabled to have a full life centred on God’s love: a life of **opportunity, fulfilment and service** to others

Aim of this statement

St John’s is a nurturing, inclusive school where faith, knowledge and community thrive harmoniously. We are a school rooted in God’s love and Christian values, whose aim is that individuals can flourish academically, spiritually and morally thus preparing them to positively impact society with compassion and integrity.

We nourish the curiosity in each child by creating a safe, nurturing and inspiring learning environment which is shaped by our shared Christian values and driven by a desire to embrace challenge and to grow holistically. Our community of children, parents, staff, governors and St John’s Church work together to enable all our children to become successful life-long learners in and beyond the classroom. We endeavour to equip them with respect for others, confidence in their own abilities, resilience in the face of challenge and flexible skills for life in abundance.

Policy Statement

As a Church school, worship is an affirmation and celebration of our Christian ethos where children have the opportunity to learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. Worship in our school is not simply a statutory duty. It is the heartbeat of our school life – a time to gather together, reaffirm our vision and associated values (hope and aspiration, peace and understanding, wisdom and truth, love and forgiveness, kindness and respect, courage and responsibility) and celebrate the central role that each pupil and adult have to play in our community.

Our acts of collective worship reflect the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community (see our Spirituality statement.)

The aims and purpose of Collective Worship as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs
- To encourage participation and response
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit

- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes

The Legal Requirements

We seek to comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
- The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for worship such as the whole school, year groups, tutor groups, classes, or other combinations.
- Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
- The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but all schools are able to hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.
- Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England school rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Principal/Headteacher.

Principles of collective worship

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality (see Church of England's Collective Worship Guidance).¹ Collective worship therefore will be:

- **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 and sing 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.

Implementation

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf>

In addition to the above, we seek to provide acts of Collective Worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England. Therefore:

We use the Bible as a sourcebook for inspiration and learning and make pupils familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture. We also introduce them to a variety of well-known prayers – many of which express the central beliefs of Christians throughout the ages.

We use aspects of Anglican liturgy to create a framework for worship, at St John's we use gather, engage, respond and send out to structure collective worship. We observe the cycle of the Anglican year including celebrations of the major Christian festivals.

In St John's we aim to provide a worship space which is attractive and well prepared with appropriate thought having been given to space, seating, ambience and music.

We foster links with St John's Church, involving the Reverend Kathryn Alford and other members in leading collective worship. Coherence between worship in church and school is central to the way in which we plan and lead collective worship. Revd. Kathryn and the head teacher plan the half-termly or termly schemes for collective worship. Throughout the week the focus of collective worship is built and developed, it includes the school taking part in collective worship at St John's Church every Thursday as well as on other occasions to mark key events and celebrations in the Christian calendar.

We recognise that different members of our school community spiritually reflect in different ways. Music, story, silence, prayer, drama and other approaches are incorporated within a varied collective worship offer.

Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths

The Anglican Communion sees itself as part of a global church and promotes ecumenism. At St John's we work to promote links with other local churches and Christian organisations and welcome their clergy and leaders as contributors to acts of collective worship. We recognise that while some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, many worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which the integrity of those present is not compromised, where everyone finds something positive for themselves and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

Rights and Responsibilities

As established by the 1944 Act and reinforced through this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However, having chosen to send their children to St John's it is hoped that no one will exercise this right. Should such a situation arise, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the requirements of the Act.

Planning

Planning for Collective Worship is led by the headteacher and vicar, it is undertaken in consultation

with the school's adult community. Plans follow the cycle of the Anglican year and include the school vision and values, aspects of our spirituality statement and a range of themes which we identify based on the children's understanding and developmental needs.

The headteacher ensures that leaders and visiting speakers receive copies of the long-term plans. Individuals and groups are responsible for using the plans as a basis for developing their own short-term plans for individual acts of worship.

Organisation

An act of Collective Worship is held daily which involves the whole school. Where collective worship forms part of our Friday celebration assembly, we ensure that there is a clear distinction between the two elements of gathering.

The headteacher and other members of staff regularly work together with the children's worship groups to lead Collective Worship.

We conduct Collective Worship in a dignified and respectful way expecting children to behave appropriately. We create a suitable atmosphere by using music, pictures, a cross and a candle to act as a focal point. We have an established pattern to our collective worship across the week:

Monday – the key theme of the week is introduced by the head teacher. Hymns and songs are sung that reflect the theme, the lyrics and their relevance to the theme are explored during this collective worship.

Tuesday – led by a teacher the theme is further developed and has a strong PSHE focus within the worship.

Wednesday – the theme is further explored through bible passages, stories, drama and singing. This is led by the head teacher.

Thursday – collective worship takes part in church and is usually led by Revd. Kathryn or another member of the ministry team. The theme is further developed and links are made to the week's previous collective worship. Parents are invited to join.

Friday - We use Friday morning Celebration Assemblies as an opportunity to share children's achievements and to celebrate their successes. These include prayers, hymns, prayers led by the children and the singing of the school prayer; this plays an important role in promoting the ethos of the school. All parents are invited to attend to share the celebration, it is an important school community event. Governors are also welcome to attend acts of worship at any time and are proactive in their monitoring visits in including attendance at Collective Worship.

Resources

There is a wide selection of assembly books and artefacts which we regularly update and improve to inform our planning and leading of collective worship. We have a collection of CDs which are used to provide suitable music as children enter and leave the hall as well as to accompany singing. Those planning and leading worship also access professional development opportunities.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

We recognise that although SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of Collective Worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area. For example, children will be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate the deeper meanings of life, consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness, appreciate the contributions of others and

respond to their needs, value their own culture and the cultures of others.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We aim to develop the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship by continuing to keep records of Collective Worship and discussing with adults and children their views on its effectiveness. We make the criteria for successful worship available to all those who plan and lead it; these criteria are found on the Collective Worship monitoring sheets. The co-ordinator, staff and governors (on their monitoring visits) routinely observe and monitor acts of Collective Worship in line with these criteria.

Inclusion

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs when appropriate.

Implementation of Policy

The headteacher as Collective Worship Coordinator is responsible for this policy which will be reviewed every two years. Its implementation is the responsibility of all those planning and leading Collective Worship.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Links to other policies and documents:

- Spirituality statement
- Collective worship plans
- Courageous Advocacy policy
- Vision and Values
- The St John's Journey – our Enrichment Programme