



## St Mary's Church of England Primary School

# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

**Adopted by Governors:** September 2024

**Next Review Date:** September 2026

### **Mission Statement**

**"Through humility, courage and devotion, we blossom and grow."**

The daily act of collective worship is a legal requirement in all schools. In church schools this is Christian worship and reflects the traditions of the Church of England.

St. Mary's Primary School is a Church school where our Christian faith lies at the heart of our ethos, creating and nurturing a compassionate and secure family community. We provide a caring school environment which challenges, motivates and stimulates each child, whilst fostering qualities of excellence.

St. Mary's C of E Primary School is a 210-place school for children aged from 4 to 11 years. The school has seven classes organised as mixed ability classes across the seven year groups. The Local Committee of St Mary's Church of England Primary School adopted this updated Collective Worship Policy in the autumn term of 2024.

At St Mary's, collective worship is a time for the whole school community to step away from the busyness of daily routines to pause and reflect. This period each day enables us to create a sense of belonging through worship. It is about sharing our common concerns and responsibilities whilst exploring positive attitudes and values towards life both within the school community and beyond. We are committed to ensuring every individual derives some benefit from these sessions.

Our collective worship affirms and celebrates the values and ethos of our school. We aim to begin to understand the issues of Christianity with God and the teachings of the gospels through values and themes. Collective worship is a special time for our children and staff to reflect upon their life experiences and develop their own spiritual identity.

Collective church school worship provides everyone with the opportunity to:

- pause and reflect
- express praise and thanksgiving to God
- reflect on the attributes of God

- reflect on the teachings of Christ
- affirm Christian values and attitudes
- share each other's joys and challenges
- celebrate special times in the Christian calendar
- foster respect and unity • deepen spiritual awareness.

All church primary schools have close links with their parish churches. Clergy and leaders from other Christian denominations visit regularly to contribute to worship in school and occasional services are held in the local church.

### **Aims and purposes**

We aim, through the Christian ethos at St. Mary's C of E Primary School, to encourage all participants in school worship to communicate with God their questions, aspirations, feelings, thoughts and to give thanks.

We aim to help children consider Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development and to explore their own beliefs.

We encourage in children a sense of community spirit and promote a common Christian ethos with shared values, reinforcing positive attitudes.

In order to achieve these aims, we provide the following opportunities:

- time to come together to praise God
- time for thinking, sharing, listening, discussing, silence and reflection
- time to learn about Jesus' teachings from The Bible
- opportunities to explore and reflect on general, current themes
- an understanding of Christian traditions and beliefs
- an awareness of key events in the Liturgical year
- time to reflect on Christian symbols and their use in worship (e.g. cross, candles, bread, wine etc.)
- time to worship through traditional and contemporary hymns and songs
- opportunities to listen to special visitors who are invited to attend and lead school worship.

The Christian Distinctiveness Officer plans yearly school values and themes which Collective Worship plans follows. These values have been carefully selected from the values that form the foundation of St Mary's and connect to the four school values:

- Wisdom
- Hope
- Respect
- Community

### **Collective Worship**

We understand that worship is a special act or occasion where we, as a school, show reverence to God. Collective worship involves members of the School Community coming together and participating in an assembly.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', 'we normally base our assemblies on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. We do, however, conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faiths and beliefs of all the members of the school.

While the majority of acts of worship in our School are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other traditions that are represented in our School and wider community.

### **Organisation of Collective Worship**

We hold a daily act of worship in our school, taking various forms:

#### **Monday**

- Story assembly led by the Head teacher. A bible story or similar is used to explore the value or theme of the week related to special religious events from around the world or social issues that may have occurred during the week.

#### **Tuesday**

- A visiting representative from one of the local churches leads this whole school assembly which again is explored through Christian or other faiths from around the world. All staff attend this act of worship.
- The members of the local churches additionally prepare Open the Book (OtB) at least once a term. It is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable and involving the children as much as possible.
- One Tuesday a Term, the School Worship Team creates and leads its own assembly.

#### **Wednesday**

- Hymn Practice. These assemblies are led by the choir master from St. Mary's Church. The children learn singing techniques, building their confidence to perform in front of an audience.

#### **Thursday**

- Key Stage/Class assembly. A member of staff leads a key stage assembly, based on the theme of the week, to allow for differentiation across the age groups. On some Thursdays, a class assembly will be held where a class leads the assembly.

#### **Friday**

- Celebration Assembly led by our Pupil Leadership Team and the Head teacher. Children from each class are nominated by their class teacher where they have acted upon our school values. This assembly promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way that home and school work together to support the achievements of our children. All staff attend this assembly.

All assemblies follow the same structure as laid out on the assembly planning sheet. An example of which can be found at the end of this policy.

A variety of methods and experiences are used during our collective worship sessions, including:

- a story or reading from the Bible
- a poem or story
- a film clip or presentation
- a personal account of an experience or event
- an inspirational figure or group
- pictures/artefacts
- hymns
- prayers
- music
- silence for reflection
- visits to church
- visitors to school

All classes say Grace before lunchtime.

#### **□ End of term awards.**

During the Autumn term of 2026, St Mary's School introduced the End of Term Awards, created to celebrate pupils who have particularly excelled during that period. Each half term, three awards are presented: one for Achievement, one for Kindness, and one for Effort. Recipients are presented with a certificate, which is announced and celebrated during a special assembly by our Headteacher.

#### **General Format of the Assemblies Themes**

- We take the themes of our assemblies from the traditions of the Christian faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar.
- The themes of our assemblies also reflect and build upon topics that we teach as part of the School curriculum.

#### **Atmosphere**

- Children and adults enter and leave the assembly in a dignified and respectful manner, often to carefully selected music, whilst drawing on children's talents where possible.
- All are encouraged to appreciate that assembly time is a period of calm reflection, a special time, where appropriate behaviour is expected.
- We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to what is being presented to them.

#### **Main Assembly**

- A candle is lit as a sign of prayer and meditation and provides a focal point for reflection on the theme.
- All Assemblies start with the words "Peace be with you" "and also with you" and end with "Go in peace" "Amen".
- The theme of the assembly is introduced and the main part of the assembly takes place, through story, drama, etc.
- All are encouraged to participate in prayers and hymns.
- Children are encouraged to answer questions about what they have read and heard.

## **Collective Worship Team**

- The Collective Worship Team is responsible for evaluating an act of worship each term, creating and delivering an assembly a term and for monitoring the prayer and reflection sites around the school.

## **Right of Withdrawal**

We expect all children to attend assemblies. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The Head teacher keeps a record of all children who are withdrawn from collective worship.

## **Church links**

Every term, the school goes to St Mary's Church for a service, for example our New Beginnings Service in September, Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, Easter and our Leaver's service. Parents and Governors are invited to be part of these services. We are also invited to be part of the family worship at St Mary's during any other significant events. Children are also invited to visit local places of worship to gain a better insight into how different people worship.

## **Monitoring, Review and Inspection**

Children are encouraged to feedback through the Collective Worship Team, the School Council, circle times, and peer mediation groups about the acts of worship they have been involved in. The children's thoughts are also gathered when the RE Governor and Coordinator are collecting evidence for their subject evaluations.

It is the role of the Governors to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. This is usually conducted by the Collective Worship Governor, currently Rev'd Dr Rachel Greene from St. Mary's Church.

The Diocese inspects the school regularly. This involves a visit and an observation of an act of collective worship. The school was subject to a SIAMS visit in 2024 and received an extremely positive report for its Christian distinctiveness.

The school is also inspected through Section 23 at or around the time of each OfSTED inspection date.  
Example of Weekly Worship Planning Sheet:

# **Monday Worship**



<p><b>ENVIRONMENT – Creating a sacred space/atmosphere</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alter visible and reflecting theme</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Candle (focal point)</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>GATHER TOGETHER</b>  Use greeting (eg. Peace be with you, and also with you)</p>
<p><b>THEME:</b></p> <p><b>DATE:</b></p>
<p><b>THE MESSAGE</b></p> <p>Scripture reading/reference:</p> <p>Exploration of the theme with Scripture/Christian application:</p> <p><b>PRAYER:</b></p>
<p><b>REFLECTION/GOING FORTH</b> How does this relate to me?  What am I going to do now?</p>
<p><b>HYMN/MUSIC/CELEBRATION – (Sung worship)</b></p>
<p><b>DISMISSAL</b> (Ensure the end is clearly marked eg. Silence/"Go in peace, Amen"</p>