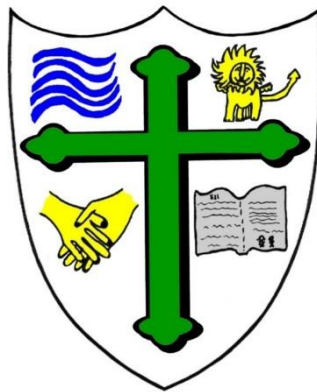


Highcliffe St Mark Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

'Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs' Psalm 100



Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Board of Education

Reviewed (date)	February 2026
Reviewed by (name)	Claire Barker
Approved by Governors (if applicable)	March 2026
Review due (date)	February 2027

Collective Worship Policy

Introduction

This policy is an agreed statement of the values and aims of collective worship at Highcliffe St Mark Primary School. It has been prepared by the governors and Headteacher with assistance from other staff and diocesan advisers. Collective worship is valued as a central aspect of the life of our church school, through which children grow spiritually, emotionally, morally and culturally. Our worship flows from our theologically rooted Christian vision, shaped by Psalm 100 and Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Through this, pupils and adults are enabled to flourish spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

Legal status of collective worship

In a Church of England school, worship must be in line with the trust deed of the school and will reflect the traditions of the Church of England, i.e. the Anglican tradition. In line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the school provides an act of collective worship every school day, recognising the legal right of withdrawal for parents.

The right of withdrawal

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship. We ask for this to be discussed with the Headteacher so the exact nature of worship is understood by the parents before this becomes a permanent arrangement; alternative activities can be provided for worship time in consultation with parents. Please be aware that this does not mean that the children will be exempt from the Christian ethos of the setting which underpins our teaching, learning and relationships. Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Headteacher. A short meeting will be arranged to ensure parents understand the invitational nature of worship and to agree suitable, supervised alternative activities for their child.

Worship in our school should:

As worship:

- Be at a level to enable children and adults to explore their own understanding of God within a Christian framework
- Explain and promote the core Christian values of the setting
- Have Integrity as acts of Anglican worship whilst being invitational, inclusive and inspirational
- Be based on Biblical text or themes
- Be central in importance to the life of our school community, which is part of a wider community that embraces the whole world
- Mark the seasons and festivals of the Christian year
- Develop understanding of Anglican traditions such as the lighting of a candle or use of a cross
- For people:
- Develop personal spirituality within the setting community through a range of experiences including individual and collective prayer
- Celebrate the God given gifts and talents of individuals

- Make a significant contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of members of the school community
- Consider the beliefs and values of others, especially those within the setting community

To comply:

- Reflect any trust deed of the setting
- Be clearly outlined in the setting prospectus and documentation
- Involve children and adults in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship e.g. through acting out stories
- Be monitored and evaluated by foundation governors for the impact it has on the school community

Aims of our worship

- To promote the joy of worship as engaging, inspiring and transformative
- To develop spirituality, morality, social and cultural values
- Sometimes to provide a peaceful environment enabling stillness, reflection and prayer
- Sometimes to be noisy and joyous with singing, music, dance, drama, gymnastics etc
- To give an opportunity to experience faith as revealed in the Bible
- To understand, celebrate and develop children's knowledge of Christian beliefs, celebrations, traditions and religious festivals in the Anglican Church's year
- Facilitate a deeper understanding of the Christian story narrative, from creation to the present day
- To appreciate that people, cultures and beliefs differ and to demonstrate respect, tolerance and generosity towards them
- To develop young children's sense of self-worth and to provide opportunities to celebrate achievements
- To develop a caring attitude to others and a sense of community and loyalty
- To provide opportunities for children to plan, lead, contribute to, monitor and evaluate collective worship
- To invite clergy of the parish, other lay members of the parish and other Christian leaders in the community [as are acceptable to the parish church] to lead worship weekly



How we achieve our aims

Collective worship intentionally nurtures spiritual development, creating opportunities for awe, wonder, meaning-making and personal response and promotes a culture of justice and responsibility, encouraging pupils to notice and respond to injustice locally and globally. We aim to promote collective acts of worship, which are rich, meaningful experiences that are appropriate and significant to the pupil's needs, age, development and interest by:

- Creating a sense of occasion and reverence
- Providing opportunities that develop pupil's awareness of what is beautiful, good, wonderful,

awesome and puzzling in life experience

- Arranging worship at different places when possible, different times with different people and groupings, involving all members of the setting community at some time
- Planning and linking themes which focus on a particular idea/concept, i.e. the liturgical year; festivals and celebrations, our Christian values
- Using a wide range of resources, artefacts (from religious and secular sources), music, art, drama and external visitors to engage children's interest
- Encouraging children to participate and experience different styles of worship, e.g. prayer, praise, silence, rituals, and become familiar with the language of worship, Biblical readings and liturgy
- Providing opportunities for children and adults to reflect, contemplate their own thoughts, feelings and beliefs
- Using the centrality of prayer – personal silent prayer, personal shared prayers, collective prayers, writing prayers; all prayer will be invitational
- Involving young children and members of the wider community to participate in collective worship and activities within the parish
- Presenting and creating displays that promote and enhance spiritual ideas, thoughts and questions

Central attributes of an act of worship

The setting will endeavour to fulfil the following 'central attributes' of worship:

Gathering Making worship a special time of the day

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



Collective worship should be planned systematically, so that there is continuity, variety and clear focus on Christian beliefs and festivals. Worship is led by a variety of people that include school staff, young children, representatives from the parish church, members of different faith communities and members of the local community.

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 an invitational prayer, offered spontaneously by a child or adult, read out or recited.

Children understand the nature and purpose of prayer

Children understand the part prayer may play in their lives and the life of the setting community

Prayer contributes to the spiritual development of individuals and the whole setting community

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



The school has a 'reflective area' to engage and promote individual young children and adults, as well as designated special spaces in classrooms or shared areas.

Planning

Collective worship is planned so there is variety and clear focus on Christian beliefs and festivals. We follow the Liturgical calendar when planning themes for worship as well as key Christian events throughout the year and important world events as and when they occur. Worship is led by a variety of people that include school staff, pupils, Foundation Governors, representatives from the Parish Church, PACE Trust and members of the local community.

Planning for collective worship makes explicit links with our core Christian values of respect, courage and compassion.

- Our local Parish Church vicar leads whole school collective worship twice per term.
- Members of the school community attend services at St Mark's Parish church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. In addition, our youngest children attend a welcome service at our church in the autumn term and our year 6 pupils attend a leaver's service towards the end of the summer term.
- The school welcomes members of the congregation of our Local Parish Church, St Mark's Church, every Tuesday. This team leads our foundation and Key Stage 1 children in our Open The Book collective worship.
- Key Stage 2 children welcome Keith Jewell of PACE, once every half term, who leads their collective worship linked to our planned themes.
- We also welcome other visitors to our collective worship throughout the year.

Parental involvement

Parents are actively encouraged to participate in collective acts of worship when possible.

Responsibilities

The normal expectation within our church school is for all staff to view collective worship as an important part of their own well-being and spiritual development as human beings. The school will endeavour to timetable staff so all have an opportunity to attend regularly.

At interview, all applicants are informed that the setting holds acts of collective worship that promote the Christian ethos and values of the school. The normal expectation will be that staff will

participate in and lead collective worship. The school welcomes offers from any member of staff who feels confident to lead worship.

Claire Barker is responsible for co-ordinating the programme of induction and training for staff. Claire Barker is responsible for ensuring that collective worship is carefully planned and organized.

All visiting worship leaders receive a short briefing outlining the theme, our inclusive and invitational approach, timing, and safeguarding expectations. Each visitor is also invited to offer a clear ‘sending’ message that aligns with our school’s Christian vision and values.

Monitoring and evaluation

We operate an annual improvement cycle in which worship themes and intentions are planned, delivery is observed, pupil and staff voice is gathered, and findings directly inform the next term’s planning. Foundation governor reports summarise impact and identify actions for further development. Monitoring and evaluation of collective acts of worship, is undertaken by children, governors and staff. All who deliver whole school worship will be observed on a termly basis. This process supports the school’s self-evaluation and staff development and appraisal. All leaders of collective worship are asked to evaluate continuously, reflect after every worship, to develop and improve their practice.

The governor responsible for monitoring collective worship is the Vicar of St Mark’s Church, Highcliffe. The Vicar is invited to visit collective worship sessions termly to observe and monitor the impact of collective worship on the school community.

Review

This policy should be reviewed annually.

References to ‘parish’ refer to the local parish church, St Marks church, to which the school is linked.

VERSION	DATE	REVIEWER	COMMENT
1	October 2023	Gavin Withey	Changes to reflect current practice and those responsible for leading and monitoring added
2	September 2024	Gavin Withey	Changes to job titles – i.e. Headteacher rather than Head of school
2	September 2024	Gavin Withey	Timetable of worships throughout the week removed as this was deemed procedural rather than central to policy
3	February 2026	Claire Barker	Updated to reflect current practices which were reviewed and refined during 2024-2025, removal of reference to Rev’d Veronica Brown who is no longer Vicar at St Mark’s Church. Strengthened process under right to withdraw, added safeguarding checks and procedures into visiting speakers.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 - 1a Collective worship observation form and 1b A practical guide to evaluating collective worship APPENDIX 3 - Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year

APPENDIX 1 – 1a Collective worship observation form

Setting _____

Leader: _____

Observer: _____

Worship Theme: _____

Time Allocation: _____minutes

Collective worship in Church of England Settings should at its simplest create a time and space where we can come closer to God and God can come closer to us.

CRITERIA	ASPECT	COMMENT
Central Attribute 1 Gathering	Is there a real sense of a very special time in the day? Immediate impact, relevant, welcoming, stimulates interest or dull, uninteresting, lacks focus.	
Central attribute 2 Engaging	Does the worship leader capture the attention of the children and staff so they become actively engaged in the content? Excellent - well expressed, stimulating or poor communicator Convincing, enthusiastic, warm or lack of rapport.	
Central attribute 3 Responding	Does the leader allow for a response from the children and adults – whether active or passive, noisy or quiet?	

Central attribute 4 Sending	Does the leader send us out with a clear “thought for the day” something that changes our behaviour in some way? Clear summary, learners given opportunity to reflect or unclear what the message was.	
In addition		
Content	Clear Christian / Biblical content and teaching. Woolly, lack of structure, largely secular.	
Summary		

APPENDIX 2 – 1a Observation form pointers for consideration

NB not a check list.

Collective worship in Church of England Settings should at its simplest create a time and space where we can come closer to God and God can come closer to us.

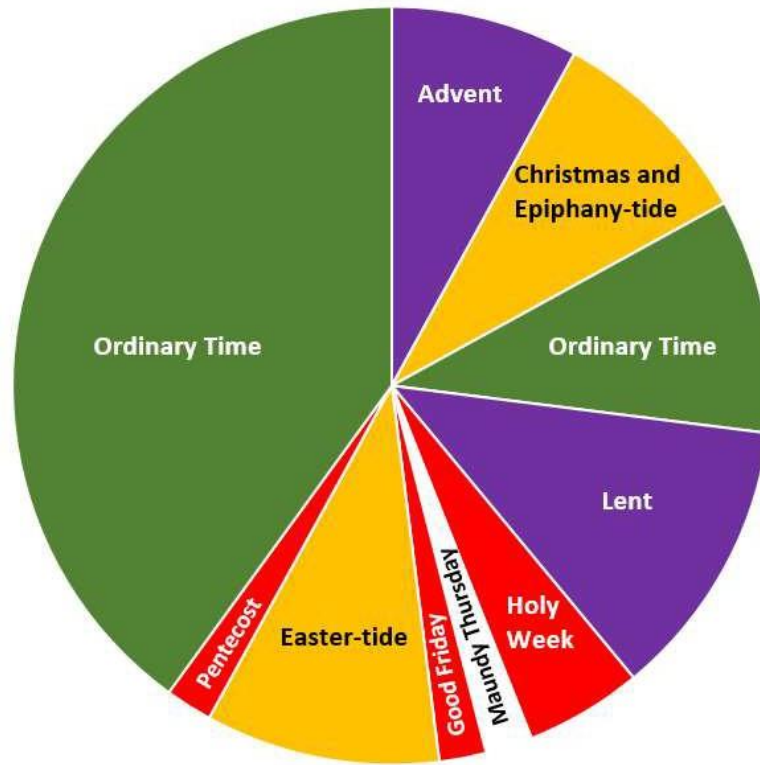
Gathering	Music (entry/exit)	appropriate / random, linked to theme, creates atmosphere, delivers a message
	Welcome	whether greetings exchanged and introduction made
	Atmosphere	extent to which act of worship is portrayed as special and important
Engaging	Focus	table, cloth, Bible, cross, candle, artefacts ICT / Visual / drama provides appropriate, linked relevant visual/factual information
	Awe and Wonder	sense given of marvel of world / creation
	Conviction	extent to which message is clear and compelling or words lack power and appear as paying lip service
Responding	Participation	extent to which learners involved in responding, partner talk, opportunities for some to participate directly
	Singing	whether there was appropriate hymn / song, quality, enthusiasm of participation
	Reflection	learners given time to pause and reflect
	Prayers	extent to which prayers are appropriate and learner friendly, whether learners are invited to respond
Sendi	Dismissal	whether the person takes charge, smiles, engages with some learners, says 'thank you'
Other aspects	Distinctively Anglican	clear reference is made to the Bible and Anglican Christian teaching and belief e.g. the Trinity - God, Jesus and Holy Spirit
	Inclusive	the worship reflects the multi faith / cultural nature of the world and feels inclusive to those of other and no faith
	Dynamism & Theatricality	was it a performance rather than an act of worship
	Open or Closed	does the leader give room for the children to build their own meanings / connections / links or are they told what to think?
	Age	are the language, concepts, ideas appropriate? Is it meaningful for the youngest yet appropriate for the oldest?

Appropriateness	
-----------------	--

APPENDIX 3

Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year

Liturgical colours and seasons



Season	Liturgical Colour	Description
Advent	Purple	The period covering the four Sundays before the 25th December: Period of preparation for Christmas.
Christmas-tide	White or Gold	25 th December to 2 nd February
Gap Between	Green	Gap of Green until Tuesday before Ash Wednesday
Lent	Purple	The 40 days of preparation for Easter
Maundy Thursday	White or Gold	The Last Supper
Good Friday	Red	The Crucifixion
Easter-tide	White or Gold	Easter Day until Pentecost
Pentecost	Red	50 Days after Easter (lasts a week)
The Rest of the Year	Green	From Pentecost to Advent

Meaning of the colours	Purple	Penitence, preparation
	White or Gold	Joy, purity, innocence, Saints who are not martyrs
	Red	Fire & Blood, therefore Holy Spirit and Martyrdom
	Green	Everything else

In some places	Blue	The Blessed Virgin Mary
	Pink	Mothering Sunday (4 th in Lent) and 3 rd in Advent

There are different versions of the colours used.
Please consult your parish for the colours used locally.