

**SALTFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



A Policy for Collective Worship

July 2021

Salford Church of England Primary School

Last Updated July 2021

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

Salford C of E Primary School's vision is built upon our Christian Values and complements and enhances our Mission.

We aim to nurture every child to be the best they can be and by each member of our community striving to do their best. We will all be 'Caring for our Community'

Our school's vision has a clear Christian theological underpinning, based on the Biblical narrative underpinning our Christian Values.

'Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness'. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

Policy Statement

In Salford Church of England Primary School worship is central to the life of the school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Salford Church of England Primary School collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*¹) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.²

¹ Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

² "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

Legal Requirements

Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in Saltford Church of England Primary School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing body of the school has the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the head teacher.

The right of withdrawal

In Saltford Church of England Primary School there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non- religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the head teacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)

Guiding Principles

Collective worship in Saltford Church of England Primary School aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

This policy was developed by the Head teacher and Collective Worship coordinator in consultation with:

- The Governing Body, especially through the Foundation Governors at their meetings with the Collective Worship coordinator held three times per year
- The teaching staff through discussion at Inset days and staff meetings and through feedback to Collective Worship coordinator
- The School Council at their meetings
- The children. Discussions were held in Circle Times, often focussing on comments which children had made about Collective Worship in the pupil questionnaire
- The parents, at the Parents' Forum

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

How Collective worship is organised

Leadership

- Daily worship at Saltford School is led by a variety of people including the Head teacher, the Rector of St Mary's Church, the 'Open the Book' team from St Mary's Church, a member of staff, a small group of pupils, a whole class or the '2 by 2' team from Widcombe Baptist Church
- We ensure that all visitors who come to lead worship are well aware of its purpose and especially how it might differ from an act of worship in a church. In particular, it is made clear that Collective Worship should not be seen as an opportunity for proselytisation, nor is it appropriate to tell children what they should believe or that what other faith groups believe is wrong. Leaders of Collective Worship must be aware of and sensitive to the broad range of beliefs held by families at the school and respect the fact that some families do not adhere to any faith group. An information leaflet for visitors is produced by the Diocese and we will make this available when needed.

Planning

- Worship is planned by those leading it in consultation with the Collective Worship coordinator. If children are planning worship, appropriate guidance is given by teachers as to what content is appropriate, style of language, inclusion of traditional prayers etc.
- All members of the school community, especially children, are encouraged to plan and lead acts of worship and they are equipped with the advice or support they might need in terms of content, organisation, worship song choices etc by the Collective Worship Coordinator or by another member of staff.
- At Saltford School we have whole school celebrations of the major Christian festivals: Harvest Festival, Armistice Day, Advent, Christmas, Shrove Tuesday, Lent, Easter, Ascension Day. We also celebrate some saints' days when appropriate. There is a crucifix in the school hall, behind which hangs a cloth which is changed according to the liturgical season. This change of colour is discussed at the beginning of worship.

How the Christian values of the school are identified, expressed and celebrated through collective worship

- Explicit links are made between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school in a variety of ways. For example, the 'Open the Book' team know which Christian value is being focussed upon in a particular term and they select stories which illustrate that value and help children think about its meaning and significance in their own lives.
- As mentioned above, all major Christian festivals are celebrated. In some services, e.g. Harvest festival, opening prayers, an act of penitence, collects, a thanksgiving and intercessions are taken from the Church of England's 'Common Worship' liturgical materials.
- We use a wide range and variety of materials to support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship, including: websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, video clips. At the front of the school hall we have a crucifix mounted on the wall, beside which two candles are lit at the beginning of worship when Opening Sentences are said. They are extinguished at the closing sentences.
- Opportunities are provided for children to learn about and reflect upon the effect of Christian faith upon the lives of others. Sometimes this might be through a special class assembly focussing on a significant Christian e.g Martin Luther King or Saint Theresa of Calcutta.
- A modern 'Grace' is sometimes said at the end of worship, accompanied by hand movements to reinforce the meaning of the words. When possible, explanations of Christians' experience of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are given. This often happens in worship connected with festivals e.g. thanking God the Father for his Creation at Harvest, at Christmas, remembering the role of the Holy Spirit in making Mary the mother of Jesus. At Epiphany, recalling the baptism of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove, focus upon the humanity and suffering of Jesus as Son of God during Lent and Passiontide and the various ways in which God was active and present as father, Son and Holy Spirit in the drama of Good Friday, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost.

- After the opening sentences and lighting of candles at the beginning of Collective Worship, children are given a time of stillness and silence. They are encouraged to use this time for personal prayer or meditation, praying or thinking about someone special to them or who is suffering in some way or being still before God to listen to Him. At some special services e.g. Remembrance, there will be times of silence to show respect. At Easter there will be a time of quietness to think about the Easter story while a wooden cross is dressed with flowers etc. During class Circle Times, there will often be times of stillness and meditation, either in silence or with appropriate music.
- Once a year, the Rector and a group from St Mary's Church lead a prayer workshop for all pupils. If possible, this is held outdoors in the Secret Garden and children are given a variety of ways to think about the meaning of prayer and how they themselves might wish to engage in prayer. Consideration is given to those who choose not to actually pray – there is the opportunity to be still and thoughtful or to think about people or issues that are important to them and others.

Organisation

At Saltford Church of England Primary School the children participate in a daily act of collective worship. Teaching staff and members of the school/church community lead services every day in the school hall. These usually follow this pattern:

- Monday: Whole school service (where a theme is introduced) - Led by St Marys Church 'Open the Book' Team and/or Reverend Daile
- Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday: Reception, Key Stages 1 and 2 each have a service - Led by the Head teacher, Mrs Sage, a member of staff (this could be part of a class Circle Time), a Foundation Governor or '2 by 2' visitors from Widcombe Baptist Church.
- Thursday: Whole school celebration service (where certificates, medals, etc... are awarded) - Led by the Head teacher

We follow a series of themes throughout the term linked to our school values and bible stories etc.

Settings and places for worship

- Worship usually takes place in the school hall. At the front there is a crucifix mounted on the wall with candles either side. A cloth behind this is changed with the liturgical seasons. The school banner is also permanently displayed in the hall, bearing an embroidered picture of St Mary's Church, Saltford. Sometimes, for special festival services, there might be an extra focus e.g. a display of harvest gifts and harvest loaf, a poppy wreath for Remembrance, a Jesse Tree and Advent wreath for Advent, Nativity crib scene and Christingles at Christmas, bare wooden cross which is later dressed with flowers at Easter service etc.
- Due to the difficulties associated with taking large groups across the busy A4 through Saltford, it is not practical to make regular visits to St Mary's Church in Saltford. However, all children

visit for a service led by the rector at least once a year. Three services are held – One for Foundation and KS1, one for Lower KS2 and one for Upper KS2. Occasionally, a KS2 teacher with members of their class leads a Service of the Word at St Mary's on a Sunday morning.

- Year 6 pupils participate in the Pilgrimage Days at Wells Cathedral.
- Each year in May, all the children in KS2 make a pilgrimage to the top of Kelston Round Hill for an Ascension tide service.
- Sometimes classes visit the Secret Garden quiet area for Circle Time or for quiet reflection. Within this garden there is a Celtic Cross which was made by pupils in 2017.
- Circle Time takes place once a week in classrooms, led by the class teacher or pupils. Children are given the opportunity to spend some time in quiet meditation as well as being able to discuss the spiritual dimension of important ethical or moral topics. There is a cross or other Christian symbol displayed in each classroom.
- A grace or other pre-meal prayer is said in class at the end of morning school, before the lunch break begins.
- Opening and closing sentences are said at the beginning and end of all acts of Collective Worship – 'The Lord is here' etc. The Lord's Prayer in traditional form is used regularly, also a form of the Grace at the end of worship.
- After the opening sentences and lighting of candles, a time of silence is observed. Children are given the opportunity to pray, to think, to be reflective. It is suggested that, in the silent prayer time, they might also listen to God.
- Bible readings are used at all major festivals with traditional introduction and response. Forms of thanksgiving, acts of penitence, intercessions and collects from Common Worship are used throughout the year at special times e.g. harvest.
- Children are usually seated in the hall in longitudinal lines, with Foundation and Key Stage 1 classes being nearest the front. Year 6 children have the privilege of sitting on chairs at the back of the hall but also have the responsibility of setting a good example of participation in responses, singing and being attentive to the worship leader.
- Worship is held at various times in the school day e.g. the session before morning play or the final 25 minutes of the day.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of each member of the school community to uphold the principles and actions of this policy:

- The governing body has ultimate responsibility for the provision and oversight of Collective Worship. Members who are Foundation Governors will meet regularly with the CW coordinator to review the provision of Collective Worship and discuss ways in which it can be developed and improved. The governors will also review and approve all relevant policies and action plans related to Collective Worship.
- The head teacher and the senior leadership team will support the CW coordinator in the delivery of worship in terms of timetabling, provision of training etc. The head teacher and

other senior teachers will sometimes be the leaders of worship and will encourage and support others in this role.

- Clergy and church partners will plan and lead acts of worship, most regularly the Monday afternoon whole school worship led by the St Mary's 'Open the Book' team. The Rector will also lead worship, including festivals and special events, and join with the Foundation Governors to review the delivery and development of Collective Worship.
- Teaching and support staff will participate in Collective Worship when appropriate. We recognise that, whilst all teachers may be required to attend assemblies, some may choose not to participate in Collective Worship. Most teachers will lead Key stage acts of Collective Worship from time to time, including occasional whole or part class led assemblies.
- Pupils will attend some form of assembly every day, unless their parents have withdrawn them. They will be encouraged to be active leaders and participants and to join in with prayers, responses and singing where appropriate. They will be given opportunities to reflect upon the importance of worship and its meaning for themselves and others. Children will be asked to write prayers and other material to be read during worship on special occasions, class assemblies etc. Pupils will be asked their views about Collective Worship in the annual online questionnaire.
- Parents and carers will be informed of what is happening in Collective Worship, including reports of special occasions like Harvest Festival, Remembrance service and the Easter service in the weekly newsletter and on the school web site. When possible e.g. Harvest Festival, parents will be invited to be guests at acts of Collective Worship. They will also be encouraged to join the children for events like the Ascension Tide service on Kelston Round Hill or to volunteer as a helper and participant at one of the Key Stage services in St Mary's Church. Parent's views about Collective Worship will be gathered at the annual Parents' Forum and they will be encouraged to give feedback after attending acts of worship.
- Visitors will sometimes be invited to lead or participate in Collective Worship. This might be a regular event e.g. '2 by 2' leaders from a Bath church, or a single visit linked to a project or current theme. The philosophy and purpose of Collective Worship within a Church of England primary school will be made clear to any visitor.
People who cannot subscribe to our inclusive and affirmative approach to Collective Worship or to the Anglican policy of gender equality in ministry will not be invited to lead or take part. This could include leaders of other local churches.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Provision is made within the rolling programme of staff meetings and INSET training for focus upon Collective Worship, sharing of good practice, information for staff about where to find good resources for their own or children's use.

Foundation Governors in particular will take the opportunity to participate in diocesan Collective Worship training and to feed back what they have learned to members of staff.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Collective Worship will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. The head teacher will sometimes ask children for feedback about the acts of worship she leads.
- Pupils will be asked their opinions about Collective Worship during Circle Times, in the annual online questionnaire and at meetings of the School Council.
- The Head teacher, the CW coordinator, the Rector and Foundation Governors will sometimes evaluate specific acts of worship led by a member of staff, pupils or visitors e.g. 'Open the Book' team. Children will also take part in these evaluations and will meet with an adult immediately afterwards to discuss the assembly. They will consider its impact in terms of prayer, atmosphere, clarity of speech, quality of story and its interpretation, music etc. A record will kept of all these evaluations.
- Evidence from evaluations carried out by members of staff, Foundation Governors and children will be used by the Head teacher, CW coordinator and governors to assess the effectiveness of Collective Worship and formulate ways to develop and improve it and make it more meaningful to the school community including children, members of staff and parents.

Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

Other Useful Documents: (can be found on the diocesan website)

- Guidance for visitors leading Collective Worship, including a code of conduct
- Example Visitors Leaflet about Collective Worship
- Collective Worship Planning Proformas
- Evaluation and Monitoring – Ideas and Systems
- Suggested Resources for Collective Worship
- Spirituality – What is it?

Date of last review:

Headteacher signed:

Date:

Chair of Governors signed:

Date: