

# Whickham Parochial Church of England Primary School



## Collective Worship Policy

**'Let your light shine before people, that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven.'**

Matthew 5:16

### **Mission Statement**

At our Parochial school we aim to provide a stimulating and caring environment with Christianity at the heart of all we do, in which every child has the opportunity to let their light shine - for themselves, for their community and for the world.

### **Aims**

At Whickham Parochial we believe that every child is entitled to enjoy their childhood, celebrate their individuality and reach their full potential. We aim to do this through:

- Creating a caring school family living by Christian values.
- Celebrating everyone's strengths and efforts.
- Valuing the opportunities we have to contribute to our community and the wider world.
- Offering wide ranging, quality experiences that stimulate children's minds.
- Encouraging respect for others, positive behaviour and good manners, enabling all children to feel secure and valued.
- Building strong links between school, home and church.
- Preparing children for future challenges in a changing world.

We wish every child to take with them happy memories of Whickham Parochial into their future life.

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## **Collective Worship Statement of Intent**

At Whickham Parochial Church of England Primary School we are committed to delivering high quality collective worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Collective Worship is the main platform for our school to gather and discuss our vision and values. It provides a unique opportunity for both pupils and adults to come together and contemplate faith and our relationship with God. As a church school, our Collective Worship is wholly Christian, reflecting the Church of England tradition of our church, St Mary the Virgin of Whickham. However, we deliver to an assembly of children and adults at different places in their own spiritual and religious journey, and therefore our worship is fully invitational. We provide an opportunity to engage on God and the teaching of the bible, which we hope will be accepted. 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, kindness, friendship and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

### **Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring**

**Inclusive:** Worship at Parochial is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. At Parochial, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Some pupils and staff in our schools come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. Pupils will be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. Care will be taken to ensure that the language used by staff facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching. Pupils will bring their own experience to worship and will have opportunities to contribute by writing prayers, choosing and/or creating content, and delivering worship. Pupil voice is encouraged through our school council. We want our worship to be accessible to all pupils, and we ensure that content is carefully chosen to be understandable and relevant, and to be delivered in such a way as to be clear to all. Pupils understand service as a worship to be a special time. They know that we need their understanding and support to include some of our neurodiverse and other SEND pupils, and that collective worship may no longer be silent, seated and still, but may involve headphones, fidget toys, wobble cushions and contributions from our gestalt processors. Pupil, staff and visitors have, of necessity and by example, become very accepting and welcoming. In some cases, the nature of 'collecting' for worship can be overwhelming for some of our pupils, and in this case we will provide adult support. If collective worship remains inaccessible, pupils will be offered quieter times to access the material.

**Invitational:** Pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There is no compulsion to 'do anything' other than show respect. Worship at Parochial provides 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 are always invited to pray if they wish to do so. Prayer is always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

**Inspiring:** Pupils and adults can expect the worship at Parochial to be inspirational. Worship at Parochial seeks to build values and inspire action, changes in attitudes, and encourages reflection on their own and the wider community's behaviour and actions. We intend to inspire those who have collected with us, to become courageous advocates of causes and seekers of justice.

### **Collective Worship Aims**

The aspiration to provide collective worship that is Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring is underpinned by the following aims and objectives:

- To explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, to reflect on moral values such as kindness, gratitude, justice, service, forgiveness and reconciliation; and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

### **Collective Worship Structure**

Collective worship is planned over a term and reflects the Christian calendar, the vision and values of the school, and the context of our school. Planning for the current term can be found on our website.

[Whickham Parochial Church of England Primary School - Collective Worship](#)

Over the week, Collective Worship is organised as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Homework
Head teacher leads worship in the hall.	Assistant HT, supported by an additional teacher, leads singing worship linked to Christian Catechism.	Teacher leads worship in the hall.	Class teacher leads a worship in the classroom linked to either Monday or Wednesday's worship which leads to action.	The whole school attends a Values Celebration which revisits our values and recognises pupils who have exemplified these values.	We share the content of our collective worship with parents and set an Act of Kindness.

Music will be played on entry to the hall. Each worship begins with a welcome and an invitation to join our worship. The candles are lit, and the children help us to say why. The prompts for staff for each candle are: The first candle we light is to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world – he brings hope to Christians and guides them towards God.

*"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*  
John 8:12

The second candle we light reminds us that we are God's eyes and ears, his hands and feet, and through Jesus, He asked us to shine for other people on earth.

*"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven."* Matthew 5:16

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The content is planned by the Collective Worship lead and will reflect our values and our priorities. Often, the content comes from the Roots and Fruits series. Bible stories, proverbs and current issues are explored. We end our service with an opportunity to reflect and, for those who choose, to pray. We then say the Lord's prayer and our service ends with the blowing out of the candles.

### **Visiting Clergy/Guests**

We are always delighted to welcome in visitors to lead our collective worship. It is helpful for pupils to experience first hand the breadth of diversity that exists within the Christian church, and to meet people who have made it their life's work to live out their values.

Visitors bring different perspectives into the school and they can participate by:

- Leading the worship
- Introducing their charity works
- Providing a personal viewpoint on faith and life issues
- Linking the school to the community

When visitors lead our worship, the Collective Worship Lead liaises with them beforehand to ensure that the content is agreed in advance and reflects our school values.

They are made aware of the school policy on collective worship, arrangements agreed with the head teacher and the content agreed.

Staff participate in worship led by visitors to ensure that the school take part together and discussion can take place afterwards with the pupils and an evaluation made.

We regularly invite into school Father James Scott, who is the rector of St Mary the Virgin in Whickham, Reverend Brigitta Steele, the minister from Fellside Methodist Church, and Andy Gawn, a volunteer from Jesmond Parish Church.

### **Time to Connect**

Each day ends in the classroom with a Time to Connect. At Parochial, staff have worked together to create a shared understanding of spirituality, which we have defined as connection – to ourselves, those around us, the natural world and beyond – which for some people can be God. We have introduced Time to Connect, a ten minute session at the end of each day where all pupils and staff stop to reflect on an image, some music and a bible quote. Participants are encouraged to think about how the quote makes them feel, and how it makes links to our feelings, and how we are connected to others, the world and beyond. For those who wish, it ends with a prayer.

### **Collective Worship and the Right of Withdrawal**

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.

As a proudly Christian school, Parochial anticipates that parents who choose our school will understand the importance of Collective Worship as a fundamental part of our distinctive ethos. However, if there are occasions where a child is withdrawn from worship, we will do all we can to ensure the pupil does not feel excluded and is still accessing work around values, especially the British values, and has opportunities to reflect on their own understanding of kindness, friendship and service.

There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

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- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much.

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.

### **Conclusion**

This policy is in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following:

Teaching and Learning

SEND

Equality Objectives

Inclusion

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

Mrs R Walton

November 2025