



# Aughton St. Michael's C.E. School Collective Worship Policy

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Foundation Governors: Andrew Housley, Margaret Ellams, Janet Smith

## Mission Statement

**A**chieving all we can to develop fully our hearts and minds.

**S**haring in a loving, caring, Christian community.

**M**aking sure everyone is valued.



## Introduction

As a Church of England school, our Christian vision, mission, motto and values are central to all we do. In line with the Church of England's vision 'life in all its fullness' we want to encourage everyone to excel and have a sense of personal worth, therefore the following message permeates in all we do:

***"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart"***  
and celebrate every step towards success that you make.  
**Colossians 3: 23**

Our school's Christian values were selected by all stakeholders. We learn about honesty, compassion, doing your best, communicating effectively, resilience and Koinonia, through the example of Jesus and teachings in the Bible. By offering pupils positive encounters with the Christian faith we maintain that we are equipping them to be the person God wants them to be.

Collective Worship is therefore central part of the life of our school as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a school community to worship and praise God, reinforce Christian values and develop the children's spiritual, moral, social & cultural understanding. It reflects the mission statement and shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school

Collective Worship and assemblies are not the same. The school community meets together for Collective Worship and there are other times when they assemble together for other purposes e.g. sports notices, distribution of certificates. Sometimes assembly will follow immediately after collective worship.

## **Aims of Collective Worship**

It is our aim at Aughton St. Michael's C. E. School is that worship should:

- reflect the schools' Trust Deed
- reinforce the Mission Statement, vision, Christian values and ethos of the school
- be inclusive, inspiring and invitational ( see Appendix A)
- offer opportunities to worship and praise God
- offer opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- enable children to explore and evaluate their own beliefs
- develop knowledge and understanding of the Christian Faith by learning about the significance of Jesus and the Bible;
- explore ideas about God and a personal relationship with God;
- to introduce the children to the traditions of the Anglican Church including the major seasons, festivals and saints days;
- enable pupils to encounter the vocabulary of worship
- allow children to encounter worship and prayer as part of the natural rhythm of the day providing opportunities to experience quiet and stillness;
- encourage a sense of responsibility towards other people and the environment and our local, national and international community;
- allow children to participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading, presentation and evaluation of worship;
- offer opportunities to share worship with parents, governors and members of the local community
- show how Christian values relate to Other Faiths

## **Legal Requirements**

Requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act:

- There must be a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
- The character of the worship must be in accordance with the original foundation and trust deed.
- Collective Worship makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the school and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the school.
- Responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the Head Teacher after consultation with the Governing Body and the Vicar.
- Acts of worship are Christian in character reflecting the traditions of Christian belief, and have regard for the age, aptitude and family background of pupils recognising the vulnerability of children.
- Parents retain the right to withdraw their children from collective worship.(This should be in writing).
- Schools must make adequate provision for pupils who are withdrawn.
- Collective worship is not 'curriculum time', and does not constitute religious education, but it ought to enhance it.

At Aughton St Michael's , Collective Worship is based on the belief that our school has a Church of England foundation and that we will promote Christian values within the school as exemplified by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. It also makes a unique contribution to the aims and ethos of the school, and therefore to the Christian education we provide.

Worship permeates everything we do as Jesus Christ is central to our faith. Parents are made aware that the school is a Church of England school and as such Collective Worship is based upon the foundations and principles of the Anglican tradition. The Christian ethos and foundation of the school are made aware to staff through adverts for jobs and on their appointment. We endeavour to send all staff on specific training provided by the Diocese for all new to teaching in a Church of England School (budget allowing). We promote the development of our School leader through Diocesan leadership training which we believe is good succession planning.

We can reassure parents that our school exerts no pressure on children to become worshipping Christians or to take part in any activity that will compromise their own family faith or lack of faith, indeed parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from worship. The spiritual, social, cultural and moral welfare of all pupils whatever their background is of prime concern to us as a school. However, Christian values underpin our ethos and teaching. They are reflected in the cycle of themes on which our daily acts of worship are based

#### **Ingredients for Effective Worship: (note ones in bold are non-negotiables)**

- **The Bible as a source for inspiration & learning**
- Reading passages from the Bible
- Re-telling Bible stories
- **Christian symbols, including candles**
- **Visual focus for prayer & reflection**
- **Observation of the religious cycle of the Christian Year e.g. Advent, Christmas, Easter**
- Observe Saints Days & Holy Days
- Recognition of other key Christian festivals e.g. Pentecost
- **Opportunity for prayer & reflection**
- **Lord's Prayer, School Prayer & Grace**
- **Meditation & Silence**
- **Christian responses & greetings**
- Stories
- **Music for worship, from a variety of traditions**
- **Singing Hymns (traditional) & Songs**
- Poetry, art, video clips, slide presentations
- Drama & role play
- Topical issues
- Outside visitors e.g. Rev Andrew,

## **Planning**

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Leaders, including the children, plan the content and activities included in Worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme, and the ages, aptitudes and the backgrounds of the pupils. Throughout their time at our school children will encounter a wide variety of activities such as drama and roleplay alongside traditional elements of worship such as prayer and song. Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to Jesus and God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation is an integral part of the process to improve the quality of worship. Worship can be evaluated by those leading worship, other staff, pupils for whom the worship is intended, parents and the governing body

## **Monitoring**

The foundation governors have a key role in this. The following areas should be monitored regularly:

- The centrality of worship in the life of the school;
- Clear Policy agreed by Governors;
- Agreed Policy is implemented;
- All staff are aware of the legal requirements for church schools;
- Worship takes place daily;
- School's Trust deed is upheld;
- Appointed staff are prepared to support the Christian ethos of the school;
- Themes are well balanced throughout the year;
- Links with the local parish & community;
- Finances are available to develop worship;
- Resources are available to support worship;
- Reporting back to Governors should be done regularly.

## **Organisation**

Collective worship takes place in the school hall, classrooms and on occasion in St Michael's Church. We follow the seasons of the Church year and within this significant festivals and other special days are observed. These always include Harvest, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Pentecost. Whenever worship takes place it is planned to promote thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

Every half term, the worship lead, produces a worship timetable for staff. We have an agreed programme for the format of the Collective Worship for each day of the week:

**Monday:** 8:50-am - 9.15am Whole school Collective Worship led by SLT

**Tuesday:** 8:50-am - 9.15am Whole School Praise led by staff

**Wednesday:** 8:50-am - 9.15am Class worship including opportunities for child-led worship e.g. worship teams.

**Thursday :** 8:50-am - 9.15am Whole school worship led by the Reverend Andrew

**Friday:** 8:50-am - 9.15am. Whole school worship. We then follow with an assembly celebrating 'good work and achievements' of the children. Parents are invited to attend and this is advertised through our newsletter.

### **Every Half Term**

Every half term the children are given the job of 'Worship Leaders.' This means they may be invited to do things such as;

- Set up alter table
- Light the candle
- Pick a hymn to sing.
- Lead the greeting
- Lead the prayer (school one, one provided in worship resources or their own)
- Lead the reflection
- Support the retelling of Bible stories

During the last week of every half term, Worship Leaders from each class take turns to lead their class worship. The parents of the children involved in leading the worship are invited to attend. This means that at some point throughout the year, every child is given the opportunity to plan and deliver worship.

Worship is continued during the day when all children say 'grace' at the beginning of lunch in their classrooms, and all classes join in a prayer at the end of the school day before going home.

### **Special Services**

**Harvest Service** We hold a special Harvest in Church During Autumn 1, which is led by the pupils of Year 5 accompanied by whole school singing. All children attend this Church service and parents are also invited. After the service, the produce donated is taken to a local food bank.

**Nativity** This is an important act of worship which is organised by the Infant children and their teachers in December each year. Parents are invited to attend.

**Christmas Service** this is led by the pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 accompanied by whole school singing. All children attend this Church service and parents are also invited.

**Easter Service** This is organised by the staff and children in Years 1 and 2 accompanied by whole school singing. All children attend this Church service and parents are also invited.

**End of Year Service** Each year, the children from Year 6 attend the 'Leavers' Service' at Liverpool Cathedral for all those children who are leaving Church of England Primary Schools in the Liverpool Diocese.

## **Delivery**

Worship has a variety of leaders from both within school and from the local Church Community. Children are also given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year. Visitors are welcome to lead collective worship from time to time and are given guidance on the structure of our worship (Appendix B) and worship policy. Leaders from faiths within the area help us to increase the pupils' awareness, promote British Values of respect and tolerance.

Each half term we have a theme for the Collective Worship which focuses on our school values, festivals and Saint days. A focus table with a Bible, cross and candle is set up at the front of the hall and in classrooms during class worship. The colour of the cloth on the table relates to the season of the Church's year.

## **Music**

Music is used at the beginning and end of each Act of Worship to help create the appropriate atmosphere for the Service. Singing is an important part of worship and a variety of songs are used to enhance the children's' worship. Hymns/songs are sung at some point during every Act of Worship,

## **Main Teaching/Worship Theme**

The person leading the worship will usually tell a story, or illustrate the main idea of the theme for the day. Children often take part in the worship answering questions, performing parts assigned to them or leading prayers. Visual aids are often used to enhance the meaning of the story or idea, or as a focus for the children's attention. Effective use of ICT is used in the Hall enabling film clips and Power Point to be used. We aim to make the worship relevant and child centred.

## **Reflection and Prayer**

There will be some time given in each type of worship for the children to reflect quietly on what has been presented, and to pray and to make a personal response. We need to give the children (and members of the school family) opportunities to explore, encounter and experience prayer. These can range from traditional to creative. Some types of prayer are more suited to whole school Collective Worship whilst others may be better in the more intimate settings of classrooms or prayer spaces. Reflection areas are a focal point in every classroom and these are linked to a particular Christian value each half term. All children and adults are able to access these and provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **School Prayer**

Dear Lord,  
We remember that you made us and love us,  
Thank you for everyone who works in our school.  
Help us to care for our world and those around us.  
Help us to always do our best.  
Amen

## Appendix A

### Collective Worship in Church of England Schools

# Inclusive Invitational Inspiring

## Guidance Document

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### Introduction

Church of England schools are committed to offering high quality collective worship. They are places that recognise and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing the school's Christian vision. In practice this means that structure, planning, evaluation, participation, collaboration, and inspection of worship are all taken seriously by the school and by diocesan authorities.

This document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish and to 'live life in all its fullness' John 10:10.

In Church of England schools, collective worship is seen as more than a daily 'awe and wonder' moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.

*We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives...Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.<sup>1</sup>*

This form of encounter through worship should be truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality. This is an approach that seeks to meet the needs of all, wherever they may be on their journey of faith and belief.

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<sup>1</sup> The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. (The Church of England Education Office 2016) page 10

## Collective Worship and the Law

Collective worship in community schools is grounded in the historical past and enshrined in educational law to be '*wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*'<sup>2</sup>. In Church schools the requirement instead to reflect the Anglican status of the school as expressed in its trust deed liberates those leading collective worship to build on the rich, lived diversity of Anglican tradition and identity. In the same way as worship in churches is aspirational, constantly evolving and being re-imagined there is an expectation of a continuous, dynamic reimagining of what collective worship means in the Church school.

## Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring

**Inclusive:** Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. In the Church school pupils, their families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our schools will 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 should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. Although part of a national legislative framework, collective worship in the Church school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

**Invitational:** Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should 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. The metaphor of 'warm fires and open doors'<sup>3</sup> captures this idea. The warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. There is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith. Importantly the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable. Pupils and adults should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer should always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies<sup>4</sup> used in worship should reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship, it should connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used should reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community.

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<sup>2</sup> *Education Reform Act 1988 section 7(1) and the corresponding section of the Education Act 1993*

<sup>3</sup> Speech by David Thomson, Bishop of Huntingdon 2014 quoted in *The Fruits of the Spirit: A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education* (The Church of England Education Office 2015) page 13

<sup>4</sup> Where there are joint schools the liturgies should reflect this status

Care should be taken with the music and liturgy: the traditional and modern riches of Christian hymnody and music will be drawn upon, but schools should think about what is most appropriate, at a given time, for the spiritual life of their particular community.

**Inspiring:** Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in a Church school to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

There will always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools and so the Church of England recognises the right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils<sup>5</sup> who wish to exercise this option. This, and how to exercise this choice, should be explained fully in the school's collective worship policy and referenced on the school's website.

### **Aims and objectives**

The aspiration to provide collective worship that is Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring is underpinned by the following aims and objectives and will be monitored and quality assured through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools<sup>6</sup> (SIAMS)

Collective worship in a Church of England school will do the following:

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, 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.

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<sup>5</sup> Under Section 55 of the Education and Inspections Act, it remains the case that only pupils in sixth form education or over the age of compulsory school age (Section 55. 9) may withdraw themselves from collective worship.

<sup>6</sup> The Church of England Education Office, *Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Evaluation Schedule* (The National Society 2018)

## **Provision**

The rhythm of daily worship allows pupils and adults to step away from the target-driven culture of much of education, creating a space for an encounter with faith in God. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on larger questions of meaning and purpose. Pupils and adults can expect that the school's collective worship practices will provide a shared set of symbols, signs, words and actions which give the community a language upon which it can draw, in times of joy and grief. Such an experience is key to fostering a sense of fellowship and cohesion within the school community. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, this time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community.

Throughout the year, Church school communities may meet to celebrate and mark certain seasons in the Church calendar, such as Lent and Advent. Other important events in the school year, such as the start and end of the academic year, may be marked by formal acts of collective worship. Pupils and adults will encounter the practice of regular prayer and worship as a normal part of the life of the school. These activities will help provide a rhythm and stillness as a pattern of community life.

Parents, pupils and adults can expect that worship in a Church school will follow a recognisable structure that will help focus worship on one idea. This helps to give organisation and clarity to the unfolding of that idea, as well as helping the leader to ensure that worship is age-appropriate and moves away from making it a performance art. This could take the form of a welcome or prayer followed by a consideration of a Bible passage or story that the group can then reflect on through discussion, prayer, silent reflection or music. It will be something that pupils and adults may want to share and discuss with others in school, in the community and at home.

## **Developing staff expertise and knowledge: Confidence through professionalism**

Parents, pupils and adults are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a Church school context and by those who are professional in their approach to working with pupils and adults from all faiths and none. Therefore, it should be a priority to build up the expertise of staff, pupils, clergy and other adults in facilitating collective worship in Church schools. To do this the school should ensure the following.

- Worship leaders, including clergy, should have access to regular training, primarily through local diocesan education teams.
- Pupil worship leaders should be supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship.
- Worship leaders, including clergy, should have access to high quality and current resources.
- The governing body should have robust systems in place to monitor the impact of worship effectively; this monitoring will include and meaningfully involve pupil voice. Those facilitating worship should have the opportunity to receive feedback and the hear the outcome of evaluation.
- Those from outside agencies and church groups invited into the school to facilitate

worship should be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and the school's vision. They should be supported and monitored as part of the school's systems for the evaluation of the impact of worship.

- There should be a named member of staff responsible for collective worship with responsibility for ensuring that appropriate policy and practice are in place and publicly available.

### **Collective Worship and Growing Faith<sup>7</sup>**

Church schools owe their existence to the vision of Joshua Watson and the founding of the National Society, and their trust deeds to the foresight of past church communities. The local church community, through its foundation and ex officio governors, are inheritors and guardians of the school's historic trust deed. This involves honouring tradition while re-imagining how this might look today. Today this has found new expression in the 'Growing Faith adventure'.

'Growing Faith' promotes a partnership between the three local communities of church, school and household to provide space to talk of faith & spiritual matters or ask challenging questions within and between these three communities.

Three principles exemplify this approach:

- **Connected Communities:** looking for meaningful community connections in the intersection between church, school and household.
- **Encounters with God:** encountering faith and belief by engaging in conversations about God as individuals and together.
- **Imaginative practices:** searching for 'a new way of being church' and creating new thinking and new doing in relation to children, young people and households.

This has been described as developing 'faith talk' in the 'Faith in the Nexus' report<sup>8</sup>. Specifically, the Church school is a place for 'faith talk' where Encounters with God may happen. The 'Growing Faith adventure is not part of the SIAMS schedule but the local church should normally expect to be part of a church school partnership that encourages and supports the school in effectively developing the impact of and provision for worship. Families can also expect to be partners in collective worship: involved, informed and enabled to collaborate at home if they should wish.

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## Appendix B



# Structure of Class Worship

## Welcome (Candle)

- As children enter class worship have a hymn playing that the children have been learning in 'Praise'
- In front of everyone, set up the alter table and ensure children know what each item represents.

*Bible represents the Father, Candle represents the Holy Spirit and the Cross represents the Son. The Ribbon represents the colour of the Church Calendar year.*

- Greetings and lighting of the candle



*purple*

the color of royalty  
and penitence



*white*

the color of joy  
and celebration



*green*

the color of growth  
and new life



*red*

the color of fire  
and passion

## Learning (Windows) and Reflecting (Mirrors)

- *Introduce the theme and link it to their own experience*
- *Use a Bible or other reading/story (be imaginative)*
- *Explore the message through questioning /explanation*
- *Prayer and/or reflection time (period of silence)*

## Responding (Doors)

- *Dismissal ( A thought/ message to take into the rest of the day)*
- *Music on exit*

**Everyone  
Excels**

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart" and celebrate every step towards success that you make.*

Colossians 3: 23