



Offwell Church of England VC Primary School

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Our Vision: Be well; Learn well; Live Well; Offwell

Our Values:

Reviewed: November 2025

Next review: November 2028

Introduction

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do.

‘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.



At Offwell, worship is central to the life of 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 beliefs and family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship at Offwell takes account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Offwell, 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*) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

Church of England Guidance

This Collective worship policy draws on guidance from the Church of England¹. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>

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.

Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at anytime in the school day and in any groupings. The Collective Worship Coordinator plans the timetable and themes for collective worship. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. Worship at Offwell should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing body of the school have 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 headteacher.

The right of withdrawal

At Offwell, there are some 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 Offwell 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 headteacher 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
- That any child withdrawn from worship should not feel excluded and would have reasonable alternative provision made

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.

Guiding Principles

Collective worship at Offwell 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 in consultation with staff and governors and took into account available guidance. 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 on the school website.

How Collective worship is organised

Collective worship is held daily and takes varying forms. At the time of writing the structure is as follows:

Monday: Class Worship Using 'Picture News' – each class takes it in turns to have worship in the church on a weekly rota

Tuesday: Key Stage Worship

Wednesday: Whole School worship

Thursday: Key Stage/Singing Worship

Friday: Celebration Worship

Leadership

- Collective worship is led by all teaching staff (including the Headteacher) on a rota. Monthly, volunteers from the Open the Book Group visit and a local clergy member also visits to lead collective worship.
- Support and guidance is given to visitors leading worship by the collective worship coordinator. An information leaflet for visitors is produced by the Diocese and is made available to visitors.

Planning

- The collective worship is planned by the collective worship coordinator with the Ethos Group (made up of children, parents and governors). Different themes are explored that fit with the school's vision and value.
- Children are involved in the planning and delivery of collective worship. They are supported by the collective worship coordinator.
- Collective worship reflects the church year and celebrates key Christian festivals. It also takes into account the liturgical colours of the seasons of the church year.

- Bible stories are an integral part of collective worship and links from these are made to the school's vision and values.
- Traditional Anglican liturgy is used to welcome and 'send' participants from collective worship. E.g. This is the day that the Lord has made *Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*
- A range and variety of materials are used, including: websites, artefacts, stories, drama scripts, artwork, music, songs, film clips, focal points e.g. a picture or candle
- 'Picture News' collective worship resource is included weekly, to 'demonstrate the presence of a living God. Children discuss news stories in a Christian context and develop their spirituality. Children can discuss **Courageous Advocacy** and **Respect** when encountering news about social issues and others' experiences.' *Picture News website*
- Careful consideration is taken in the planning of collective worship to explore the Trinitarian nature of God.
- Through planned opportunities for prayer and reflection, children spirituality is nurtured.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body – Ensure the policy meets statutory requirements, reflects the school's vision and values, and monitor its implementation.

- The headteacher and the senior teacher – Provide strategic direction, oversee planning and delivery, ensure worship is inclusive and meaningful, and support staff development.
- Clergy and church partners – Contribute to leading worship, offer spiritual guidance, provide links with the wider faith community, and support the Christian ethos of the school.
- Teaching and support staff – Actively participate, model positive engagement, contribute to leading or supporting acts of worship, and reinforce messages in daily school life.
- Pupils – Take part respectfully, contribute ideas, lead aspects of worship where appropriate, and reflect on the values and themes explored.
- Parents and carers – Support the school's ethos, encourage children to engage with worship themes, and attend special services or events when possible.
- Visitors – Enrich worship with diverse perspectives, respect the school's ethos, and contribute in ways that are inclusive and appropriate for the school community.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Collective worship is monitored and evaluated by the collective worship coordinator and Ethos team. They evaluate individual acts of worship and monitor its impact by talking to children and members of staff.
- The focus for evaluation is the question 'How is daily collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?'
- As a result of this monitoring and evaluation, changes and improvements are made to future acts of worship.