



Collective Worship Policy

This is a Trust Policy– details specific to individual academies and their procedures are added by the academy in the *Appendices*. *(For a copy of the policy for a specific academy which includes the Appendices – see the individual academy website).*

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Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (the Trust) and all its academies (the Academy / Academies) is committed to the flourishing of all, and the Trust’s vision is:

‘For every child, within our Trust, to experience an excellent education and to realise their God-given potential to flourish.’

Rationale

The Trust understands collective worship to be an essential component within an educational experience that enables all pupils to flourish. It provides an opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter and appreciate the relevance of faith in the world today. Collective worship involves pupils and staff coming together and participating in a daily gathering. In Community Schools in line with the 1988 Education Reform Act collective worship should be “wholly or broadly of a Christian character”. Collective worship in our Church Academies is required to reflect its Anglican status as expressed in their trust deed, and so will be based on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. However, we aim to conduct our collective worship in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the academy.

Collective worship contributes significantly to the Christian ethos of the Trust. In doing so, it seeks to provide an inclusive, invitational and inspiring experience for all members of our academies by providing opportunities for each Academy to:

- Explore its Christian vision and underpinning values and virtues;
- Deepen a sense of community through sharing its common aims, values and morals;
- Consider current national and world events as they occur;
- Celebrate achievement and special times;
- Explore together the world in which we live;
- Develop a community spirit.

Aims for Collective Worship

The aims and purpose of collective worship are based on the *Church of England Education Office’s Inclusive Invitational Inspiring: A Statement of Entitlement and Expectation* (a copy of which is attached at *Appendix 1*), that it is:

Inclusive by:

- Ensuring it is accessible to pupils and adults of different faith backgrounds, those exploring their own beliefs about faith and those of no faith;
- Providing time for reflection so nurturing the awareness of life as a spiritual journey;
- Involving pupils in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship;
- Reflecting the cultural backgrounds of the local context.

Invitational by:

- Enabling all to be present whatever their faith or beliefs;
- Recognising that pupils and adults are free to engage with integrity;
- Providing optional invitations for prayer and space to reflect.

Inspiring by:

- Enabling pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we are here;
- Motivating pupils and adults into action and into the possibilities of thinking and behaving differently;
- Encouraging pupils to become courageous advocates for change.

For further details of an individual Academy's aims and purpose of collective worship – see *Appendix 2*.

Practicalities of Organisation

Our Academies hold a daily act of collective worship.

For Academy specific details – see *Appendix 2*.

Content

A plan of themes is produced annually reflecting the values an Academy has chosen.

Our Academies also consider and reflect on the festivals and special times of the Christian calendar.

For academy specific details – see *Appendix 2*.

Resources

For details of resources individual Academies use – see *Appendix 2*.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

It is the role of the Academy Governance Committee (AGC) to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. As part of this, pupil interviews are carried out / pupil evaluation forms are reviewed.

Any Academy specific details in relation to evaluation, monitoring and review are set out in *Appendix 2*.

Right of Withdrawal

As our Academies are Church Academies, we expect all pupils to attend collective worship, and we discuss this with parents / carers at the time of admission. However, any parent / carer can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the academy will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the pupil during the period concerned. Parents / carers do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with current legislation. The Headteacher keeps a record of any pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship.

Appendix 1



Collective Worship in Church of England Schools

Inclusive Invitational Inspiring

Guidance Document

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.¹

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.

¹ 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

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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*'.² 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'³ 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 liturgies⁴ 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.

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

³ 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

⁴ 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 pupils⁵ 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 Schools⁶ (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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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 to 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 Faith⁷

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' report⁸. 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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⁷ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/growing-faith>

⁸ National Institute for Christian Research in Education, Christchurch Canterbury, *Faith in the Nexus*, (November 2020) [Faith In The Nexus \(nicer.org.uk\)](http://Faith In The Nexus (nicer.org.uk))

Appendix 2

Name of Academy: Cottingham CofE Primary School

Cottingham Church of England Primary School is part of Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (PDET). This policy for Collective Worship is consistent with the purpose and aims of the school and Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (PDET) as well as the Trust Deed upon which the school was founded.

- 'To help each individual develop those qualities of mind, body and spirit, feeling and imagination, that will enable them to live a fulfilling life'
- Religious worship shall be in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church of England

As required by law [Section 6 of the Education Reform Act 1988] all pupils are expected to take part in an act of collective worship each day.

Academy specific details

We are a Christian school serving our local community, which seeks to reflect in our life and work the example and teaching of Jesus Christ as set out in the Gospels. ***"This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you" John 15 verse 12***

At Cottingham CofE Primary School – With God's help:

We CARE for ourselves, each other and the environment.

We BUILD strong and healthy relationships.

We FOLLOW the teaching and example of Jesus.

We THINK of consequences before we act or speak.

'Living the Cottingham CofE values each day.'

Aims for Collective Worship

In addition to the aims already stated, at Cottingham CofE Primary School, Collective Worship is at the heart of our life and work. We provide an invitational opportunity, for pupils, staff, governors and parents to worship in a traditional Christian style, which is consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.

We believe that worship should be;

- Inclusive - Everyone can benefit and contribute, no matter what their personal belief or commitment. Respect is shown to all.
- Appropriate to the age of the children.

- An important learning experience, which enriches the lives of those people who attend, through music, story, prayer, reflection, silence and other traditions of worship.
- A very special occasion, the purpose of which is to show reverence to God.
- Helpful to participants understanding of and identification with, the school's vision, values and aims, building a sense of community
- In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we base our times of worship on the teachings of the Bible and Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church and its relevance in today's world. However, we conduct collective worship in a manner that is respectful to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school. Whilst acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also respect and celebrate the traditions of other religions that are represented in the school and the wider community.
- Centred around our school and community chosen values of compassion, respect, honesty, perseverance, forgiveness and trust.
- Led by all members of the school community. Children are given various opportunities to take part in and lead all aspects of collective worship.

Practicalities of Organisation

We hold a daily act of collective worship. This can be either as whole-school collective worship or in individual classes. We conduct collective worship in a dignified and respectful way. Collective worship is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time; we create an appropriate atmosphere by using music or other objects, to focus the attention of the children.

We always light a candle to signify the start of worship. We invite the children to participate in prayer, reflection and songs. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and a cross and our school candle that acts as a focal point for the attention of the pupils and those present. Our altar table and classroom reflection areas are always dressed in accordance with the colours of the liturgical seasons. Collective worship is led by either the head teacher, members of staff, the children and local guests.

The School Values of *compassion, respect, honesty, perseverance, forgiveness* and *trust* are explored through our times of Collective Worship and we spend one term in every academic year considering each value. A Bible verse reflecting each value is shared at the start of each term. This verse is then shared by the whole school community during each time of collective worship throughout the term. Each termly focus is then broken down to last for a week. Worship is planned for the whole term in advance and shared with all via the school website. We take the themes of our worship from the traditions of the Christian faith and we reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar. We also use Roots and Fruits Creative Collective Worship Programme as a tool for staff to deliver the Christian Values themes.

All teaching staff are expected to lead whole school worship. As well as school staff, whole school worship will also be led by children, who are part of the Spiritual Council, guests from the local Hope Church and clergy from the nearby St. Mary Magdalene Church. This brings greater variety to our worship times and strengthens links between the Academy and the local community as well as building the skills of the pupils. Parents / carers are invited to Friday Collective Celebration Worship and other special services, e.g. at Christmas, Easter and the end of the academy year. This

promotes the community spirit of the Academy. We welcome governors' attendance at our Collective Worship at any time either as guest or in their monitoring role.

Other opportunities for prayer and reflection are given throughout the week that include: Access to a designated prayer space, class lunch time prayer and in classes during class-based worship. The spiritual garden also allows an outdoor space for children and staff to use for reflection. Worship opportunities are also offered to staff, children and their families as we attend services (e.g. Christingle and end of year services in Church).

Each act of collective worship begins in a consistent way whether being led by adults or children (See appendix 2). This approach allows all children and adults the opportunity to read the school vision and mission statements along with the chosen termly bible verse and school or the Lord's Prayer. Worship is also ended in a consistent way with our rainbow prayers provided by children and the grace being shared as a way of sending out.

Content

All Collective Worship is planned a term in advance and is reflected upon by all teaching staff, parents and children via a reflection book, displayed in the school foyer, on a weekly basis. Governors are also encouraged to attend worship regularly and to reflect on its impact. Collective worship celebrates the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage/invite the children to participate in collective worship by sharing their work with the other children, and by raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. Our Spiritual Council are involved in leading whole school collective worship on a regular basis.

We also hold weekly Collective Worship that reflects the achievements and learning of the pupils both in and out of the school. We encourage the pupils to participate in Collective Worship by showing their work to others and sharing issues that they have discussed in their classes. Collective Worship offers an opportunity to acknowledge and reward pupils for their achievements both in and out of the Academy. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the Academy, which is that all pupils are valued and all achievements recognised. For example, parents/carers are regularly invited to nominate their child for the weekly sports star award.

Children attend a school service at St Mary Magdalene Church in Cottingham at least three times a year to which parents and any members of the community are invited.

Resources

Staff and children are able to use their own chosen resources when planning the delivery of collective worship. As above, the themes to be delivered and mapped out at the start of the academic year. Roots and Fruits Creative Collective worship planner is purchased and is used to plan worship alongside resources from the Church of England, Assemblies.org.uk and SPCK (Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge). Each week's theme is prepared onto a PowerPoint that can then be adapted by the deliverer. Both entrance music and hymn accompaniment is stored centrally. Year 6 pupils are tasked with setting up and organising the necessary resources for each whole school worship.

Useful websites to be used include:

www.imaginer.co.uk

<https://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/>

<https://spckpublishing.co.uk/assemblies>

Appendix 3

When the school meets together for whole school acts of worship, these take place in the Hall at 2:45pm.

- Children and adults enter the school hall to reflective music
- Leader welcomes the children and adults with reference to the Trinity
- A candle letter is chosen and the authors of the letter invited to light the school candle
- Theme of the week is shared along with a reflective thought
- Christian value of the term bible verse shared (call and response)
- School vision shared (call and response)
- School mission shared (call and response)
- School prayer (Lords Prayer Friday) recited
- Worship delivered
- Hymn displayed and sung (Parents invited to take part)
- Cottingham CofE Rainbow prayers shared by children
Pupils are encouraged to share their own prayers using the following structure:
Red – a thank you prayer
Orange – a prayer for the world
Yellow – a prayer for others
White – a prayer for ourselves
Blue – a sorry prayer
- Candle blown end to signify end of Christian collective worship

Cottingham CofE – Rainbow Prayer

