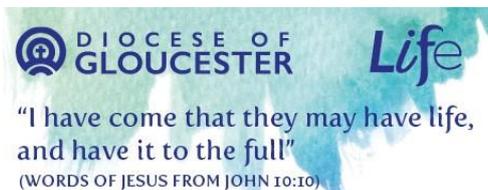


# Policy for Collective Worship in Church Schools

## Guidance from the Diocese of Gloucester's Board of Education

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Author: Jo Munn, Deputy DDE  
Written in partnership with SW Area Diocesan Advisors

Bishops Staff Team, Diocese of Gloucester

## Contents

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <a href="#"><u>Legal Framework</u></a> .....                                 | 3 |
| <a href="#"><u>School Statement on Collective Worship</u></a> .....          | 3 |
| <a href="#"><u>Aims and Guiding Principles</u></a> .....                     | 4 |
| <a href="#"><u>Organisation</u></a> .....                                    | 5 |
| <a href="#"><u>Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation</u></a> .....            | 5 |
| <a href="#"><u>Roles and Responsibilities</u></a> .....                      | 6 |
| <a href="#"><u>Staff Development and Training</u></a> .....                  | 6 |
| <a href="#"><u>The Right of Withdrawal from Collective Worship</u></a> ..... | 6 |
| <a href="#"><u>Development and Sharing of the Policy</u></a> .....           | 7 |

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| <b>Name of School: Bibury CofE Primary School</b>   |
| <b>School's Vision: A caring Christian community where every child develops a love of life and of learning, to engage courageously with the wider world</b> |

### **Legal Framework**

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. 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 Bibury Primary School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The Governing Body 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.

### **School Statement on Collective Worship**

In Bibury Primary School worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school’s vision: a caring Christian community where every child achieves a love of life and of learning. Through daily collective worship, the children learn about and reflect on Christian values and how these are all related to showing care for others and enriching their own lives. 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.

However, in Bibury Primary School the purpose of collective worship will be to lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

*“Worship in (CofE) schools promotes theological and Religious Literacy and liberates participants to an imagining of a different order of justice, mercy and hope”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup>) calendar. Pupils will

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<sup>1</sup> CEEQ Vision statement “Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good” Autumn 2016

<sup>2</sup> 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.

be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.<sup>3</sup> Collective Worship in our school is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

## **Aims and Guiding Principles**

*Collective worship in Bibury 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.
- Provide an opportunity to experience the Eucharist through an agreed service or experience (agreed with the local incumbent and the Diocese of Gloucester)
- 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.
- Our collective worship is invitational because parents, pupils and adults are given the opportunity to encounter worship without there being an expectation that they will be required to do anything. Those with different faiths or without faiths should all feel comfortable and welcome. Opportunities are provided for pupils to compose their own prayers inside their head, or to take this time to reflect on the stories or discussions that have taken place. When prayers are shared, they are invited to join in with Amen at the end if they wish to make the prayer their own.
  
- We aim to make our collective worship inspirational by encouraging pupils to reflect on big questions, and be motivated to act as a result of these discussions. For example, the headteacher has close links with Scripture Union in Romania and after hearing him talking about this in relation to generosity, they were inspired to donate stationery items. We invite a variety of leaders into the school to lead worship, representing different

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<sup>3</sup> "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)

denominations, all of whom bring a unique perspective to enhance the pupil's experience of faith.

- Our Collective worship aims to be inclusive for all, wherever they may be on their spiritual journey (whether this involves faith or not). All are encouraged to air their thoughts and ideas and there is no assumption that all will share the same Christian beliefs. Time will be given for discussion, consideration and silent reflection, enabling all participants to feel that their contributions are valid. The school has an active pupil worship council who are involved in monitoring worship, suggesting ideas and planning and leading sessions.

## **Organisation**

### **Leadership**

- Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local church and external visitors including Matt Frost from Cirencester Baptist Church, and 'open the book' team of members of the local church community. We also use the online services provided by 'ISingPop'.
  - Our local incumbent leads worship weekly as well as including the school in Sunday services at special times (for example Mothering Sunday) throughout the year. He is also available to offer support and guidance.
  - The vicar is available to support leaders of collective worship to develop their understanding of Christian theology, the teachings of the Bible and develop a deeper understanding of Anglican traditions and liturgy
  - All visitors leading worship are made aware of the focus value for the term and encouraged to make links to this to enable pupils to deepen their understanding and experience.

### **Planning**

- Worship is planned termly around the 12 Christian Values and important times in the liturgical calendar. The headteacher plans the focus for the worship and arranges the timetable for visiting leaders.
- The cycle of our Christian values has been chosen to link with events in the church year - for example, Thankfulness in the autumn term links with Harvest and Forgiveness in the spring term with Easter, which enhances the links between how these values are lived out in the school community and the bigger questions of how they link with Christian religious belief.
- In addition, worship is planned to help pupils understand the significance of key events in the life of Christ and important times in the church year - these include Advent, Christmas, Lent, Mothering Sunday, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest.
- Bible stories are selected for inclusion in worship that have clear links with the value for the term. To assist with this, the school uses the 'Roots and Fruits' resource. Pupils are also encouraged to recognise these values in other stories that may be shared (for example by visitors)
- Many of these Bible stories are retold in a modern context to help pupils to understand their relevance to modern life and faith.
- All pupils have the opportunity to lead in opening and closing worship and, through worship council, to plan and lead the worship by, for example, sharing stories and writing prayers.
- Worship is planned to include a variety of focal points: stories, poems, pictures, drama, songs, music, web-based materials and artefacts.
- Time is planned in worship for discussion, silence, prayer and reflection to ensure that the experience is meaningful, encouraging spiritual growth.

## **Organisation**

- Where possible, the whole school participates in daily worship.
- Worship takes place in the school hall.
- Children are seated in classes on the floor.
- The worship is opened by one of the pupils who invites those present to rejoice and reminds them of the importance of the Bible, the cross and candle as representations of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. These items are displayed for all to see throughout the worship. Where possible, a cloth of the appropriate liturgical colour is displayed on the worship table.
- Worship is from 9:15am to 9:35am daily
- All staff attend worship and all teaching staff are involved in the rota for leading the worship.

## **Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Worship council meetings discuss the impact of worship and children suggest improvements as necessary
- Governors attend worship and feedback to the main meetings
- Headteacher seeks feedback from worship leaders on quality of children's responses
- Bishop's Visitor reports and feedback from DGAT SILs also inform evaluation of worship

## **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. Additionally, support and guidance are provided for visitors and the clergy who lead collective worship.

(insert any further information about staff training, links to SDP, SEF, Performance Management/appraisal)

## **The Right of Withdrawal from 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.

In Bibury Primary School there are significant numbers of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view.

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 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.)

### **Development and Sharing of the Policy**

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils.

Links to other policies and documentation

### ***This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Diocesan Collective Worship Guidance Document.***

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.

### **Approval/review by governing body**

**Headteacher signed:**

**Date:**

**Chair of Governors signed:**

**Date:**

**Date of next review:            January 2023**

**Date:**