Collective Worship Policy

2026-2027



‘Every person is an individual and also part of a community’ 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Rationale

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the distinctiveness of our school, reaffirms our vision that 'Every person is an individual and also part of a community' (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) and our associated values of Wisdom and Joy. It celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community.

Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily act of collective worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

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.

Therefore, Collective Worship at Escrick CE Primary School is planned to:

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins our shared values of Friendship, Learning, Opportunity, Unique, Respect, Resilience, Included, Solve Problems and Happy. 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.

- Be inspirational and inclusive, engaging all learners so they can talk about the impact it makes on their relationships and on life in the school.

- Help all learners to understand Anglican and other Christian traditions found in the UK and worldwide.

- Provide an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals.

Introduction

In Church of England schools, daily Collective Worship is seen as 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 and spirituality, both as individuals and together.

Collective Worship is central to Escrick C of E Primary School as it strengthens and supports the Christian distinctiveness and spiritual development of our school and reaffirms our vision and core values. It celebrates our place in the community and is an essential component of an education that enables all pupils and adults to flourish.

Our Vision

We are all an important piece of the Escrick jigsaw and together we grow and learn. The Christian values of Wisdom and Joy underpin our Ethos and we value and respect everyone allowing us all to make a difference to the world.

'Every person is an individual and also part of a community' 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

At Escrick CE Primary School, our Religious Education curriculum is firmly rooted in our Christian vision and values. Our school is committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment where children can flourish academically, emotionally and spiritually. Religious Education has a core and central place within our curriculum and all our school values: Friendship, Learning, Opportunity, Unique, Respect, Resilience, Included, Solve Problems and Happy help each child to flourish. Our curriculum celebrates diversity and promotes respect for all individuals, encouraging children to develop empathy, kindness and a strong sense of community.

Through a rich and diverse curriculum, we celebrate the uniqueness of each child, promoting curiosity, creativity and critical thinking while nurturing their faith and encouraging them to explore their place in the world. We believe that everyone in our school is an important piece of the Escrick Jigsaw and together we grow and learn. The Christian values of Wisdom and Joy underpin our ethos, and we value and respect everyone allowing us to make a difference to the world.

Inclusive and Invitational

Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. At Escrick, pupils and their families can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. We acknowledge that there are pupils and staff in our school that 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 will be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There will be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. Collective worship will not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community.

It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion welcomes pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship.

Invitational

Worship at Escrick is invitational. Worship will allow the freedom for those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. Pupils and adults will always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and will be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer will always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Intent

Collective Worship at Escrick C of E Primary School is important to us as a school community. It aims to enable pupils and adults to flourish spiritually. Our shared understanding of opportunities to encourage spiritual development draws upon the work of Liz Mills, who uses the concept of a ring doughnut to explain Spirituality. The Doughnut represents the Whole Child. The outer ring is the tangible (Mind and Body), the hole represents the intangible (Spirit) but if there was no hole it wouldn't be a doughnut. This, for us, remains perhaps the best definition of spiritual development; it is the exploration and development of that hole in our centre that makes us whole.

Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils to become aware of the importance of reflection and how our positive and negative experiences can be formative. It also provides a real sense of being present and still, which are often linked to invitations to pray and reflect. Through daily Collective Worship, pupils are offered a space to hear the Christian story. Pupils are given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service, through reflection on Bible verses and our school values.

Legal Requirements

The law requires the Headteacher and Governing Body of every school to provide a daily act of Collective Worship which is in line with the school's Trust Deed and foundation. Collective Worship is regarded as an essential part of the development of the whole child and as such is recognised by staff and governors as an important part of daily learning.

Withdrawal from Collective Worship

We acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Should a parent/guardian wish to withdraw their child from Collective Worship we ask that they inform the school via the school office or by emailing admin@escrick.n-yorks.sch.uk.

We will endeavour to communicate clearly the place of inclusive and invitational Collective Worship to ensure that parents are in possession of all the necessary information. However, should a parent/guardian request that their child be withdrawn we will not attempt to persuade them to alter their decision.

If a pupil is withdrawn from Collective Worship the school is required to provide supervision but will not incur any additional cost in so doing. The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from Collective Worship.

Planning and Organisation

We hold a daily act of Collective Worship in our school either as a whole school or in classes. The structure of Collective Worship
varies across the week but always follows the "Gather, Engage, Respond, Send" pattern.

Collective Worship follows our school vision and values and is structured around:

- Bible stories

- Big ideas
- School values
- Religious events and special days
- Special events in the life of the school and wider community

Collective Worship is led by different staff within the school, including the Headteacher. It is also led by clergy and visitors from our local church and community.

Children are encouraged to be involved in leading Collective Worship. This will take the form of preparing the hall for worship, sharing prayers and songs and leading worship on an issue for which they would like to raise awareness.

Gather, Engage, Respond and Send

Gather

Purpose: To create a welcoming and focused atmosphere.

As pupils and staff enter the hall they are encouraged to be still. Three candles will be lit to symbolize the Trinity and the presence of God.

Engage

Purpose: To share the message and content of the act of worship often through a story, reading, discussion and/or singing

A lesson about a spiritual or moral theme will be shared with pupils and staff in a way that is engaging to all.

Respond

Purpose: To provide opportunities to reflect, discuss, or creatively respond to the message.

Pupils and adults will be invited to respond to the message in a variety of ways across the week: prayers, singing, writing
reflections, drawing, or participating in a group discussion.

Send

Purpose: To inspire the school community to consider how to integrate the message or moral in their own lives.

Collective Worship will end with a prayer or reflection on the theme of the day/ week.

Our pattern of Collective Worship

Whole school worship is held daily and is led by the Headteacher, senior leaders, class teachers, and visiting clergy from our local church.

Class worship is held once a week (Thursday). These are led by class teachers and provide

opportunities for pupils to explore themes in greater depth within their own classes.

The programme of acts of Collective Worship is coordinated by the Headteacher and the RE/Collective Worship Coordinator.

Acts of worship follow themes that are linked to the school's vision and values, the Christian liturgical year, and include:
- Bible stories and teachings of Jesus
- Big ideas exploring Christian concepts
- Our school values (Friendship, Learning, Opportunity, Unique, Respect, Resilience, Included, Solve Problems and Happy)
- Religious events and special days in the Christian calendar
- Special events in the life of the school and wider community

Visitors

We regularly welcome visitors to lead or contribute to our collective worship, including clergy from our local church and members of the wider community. Visitors are expected to understand the educational aims of Collective Worship at our school and the need to avoid any proselytising. Attempts to persuade pupils to adopt a particular religious or non-religious belief are not appropriate. The Headteacher is consulted before a visiting speaker is confirmed. Visitors should not speak about raising money for any particular cause(s) without the prior permission of the Headteacher.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Collective Worship at Escrick CE Primary School is inclusive and accessible to all pupils, regardless of their faith background or additional needs. We recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background, and we ensure that all can participate meaningfully in collective worship.

We make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all pupils can access collective worship, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Visual aids, varied forms of engagement, and different seating arrangements are used as appropriate.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As a school, we regularly evaluate our approach to Collective Worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community.

Methods of monitoring and evaluation include:

Termly observations: All leaders of collective worship are observed on a termly basis by senior leaders. This process supports the school's self-evaluation and is a specific responsibility of the foundation governors.

Pupil voice: Pupils are involved in evaluating collective worship through:
- Feedback during weekly class worship
- Pupil questionnaires conducted termly
- Pupil conferences with the RE/Collective Worship Coordinator
- Contributions through our School Council

Staff reflection: All leaders of Collective Worship are asked to reflect on their own practice after every act of worship, using evaluation forms to develop and improve their practice.

External inspection: Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS).

Governor monitoring: Findings from all monitoring activities are shared with the full governing body and inform our ongoing development.

Policy approval

Policy agreed by the Board of Governors: September 26

Next review date: September 27

Policy coordinator: James Broxup