



St Helen's
Church of England Primary School

Worship Policy

This policy will be reviewed at least annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

Date adopted: January 2025

Date for next review: January 2026

Worship Policy

Introduction

At St Helen's Church of England Primary School, we 'Love to Learn, learn to love, understanding that we are all different, but all equal'

This vision, rooted in Matthew 22:34-40, with our associated Christian values of Love, Friendship, Perseverance and Trust are the foundation of our school.

Supported by our local church, we are continually developing our collective worship as an expression of our vision, to be fully inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Through our daily collective worship, we offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.

We strive to enable all pupils and adults to experience Christian worship in different ways, for example by using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals.

We support pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teaching of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God and its associated language. Being true to our underpinning faith, but with deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions and worldviews and the religious freedom of everyone, we conduct our collective worship in a manner that is sensitive to and supportive of the faiths and beliefs of all members of our school.

Aims and Objectives

Our aims and objectives of collective worship are:

- to enable us to grow spiritually
- to enable all to consider spiritual, moral and social issues
- to enable all to explore our own beliefs
- to share time together as a community
- to learn from each other
- to enable all to participate in shared planning, leading and evaluation our worship
- for worship to become the heartbeat of our school

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of broadly Christian character,' we base our worship on the teachings of Jesus, the bible, and the varied liturgical traditions of the global Christian Church.

Organisation

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality.

Collective worship therefore will be:

- **Inclusive** – Our acts of worship recognise that pupils and staff come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as no faith backgrounds, so it will be inclusive of, and fully accessible to all. Care will be taken to ensure that language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith of those participating, listening or watching.
- **Invitational** – In our acts of worship, there is no compulsion to ‘do anything’. Rather, worship will 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. Pupils and adults will only be invited to pray and sing if they wish to do so.
- **Inspiring** – By asking and discussing big questions about who we are and what we do in worship we hope to motivate pupils and adults into action. There will be opportunities to think, reflect and ponder on their and the wider community’s behaviour and actions.

At St Helen’s Church of England Primary School, we worship collectively every day. Our collective worship takes place on a daily basis in the school hall from 10:15am – 10:35am. Friday collective worship takes part in classrooms allowing time to reflect on the week’s themes.

Worship is organised well in advance through a termly rota. Members of staff take a turn to lead worship. Worship is also led by the Worship council where they are encouraged to plan and lead.

Our vicar of St Helen’s Church leads worship on a weekly basis on a Wednesday morning. Family trust lead worship once a term.

The Diocesan worship themes are used as a basis for our worship. We also may choose to follow the themes of the Church festivals, explore the work of relevant charities and reflect on passing social issues in the news.

We have a four-part worship program:

- We **GATHER** together by entering the worship space quietly and respectfully. There may be music playing, a picture or question on the screen. We use a scriptural feature of call and response to signal the start of our worship together. We light a candle.
- We **ENGAGE** with the Bible reading, story or Christian value we are focussing on using a variety of ways. This could be through a film clip, pictures, a shared story, acted by children and adults or by reading from the Bible. We recognise that it is good practice to begin with where the children are. We might use a prop to start thinking or build a story over several days. Children may be asked to talk together. We talk through what the Bible teaching might mean for our own lives.

- We RESPOND to the Bible teaching through hymns, songs and prayers. The songs and hymns we share might be traditional or modern. We are mindful that some popular Christian hymns and songs use the pronoun I and could be considered too confessional to use in our inclusive setting. We take care to choose hymns and music from different traditions in the global Christian Church. Our prayers may be read or be spontaneous. There may be a time of reflection in silence. We might share the Lord's Prayer or our school prayer together. We say a birthday prayer to celebrate children's birthdays.
- We SEND everyone out of the worship space in a mindful manner. We blow out the candle. We use a scriptural feature of call and response to signal the end of our worship together. There may be a challenge or a question to think about. The candle is blown out. We listen to music as we leave.

Assemblies

Assemblies are held in addition to our daily collective worship. Assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are treasured and loved as a unique child of God. St Helen's Church of England Primary School is a successful school and we celebrate the successes of all our children at our Celebration Assembly held on a Friday afternoon.

Assemblies may also be held to talk about aspects of school life, for example, Pupil Parliament or play leaders. We might use an assembly to introduce an upcoming competition, or to celebrate sporting achievements.

All classes lead an assembly to parents to share their topic work they have completed in class including trips or visits.

Governors' attendance at our assemblies/worship is always welcome.

Right of Withdrawal

We expect all children to attend worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the worship. Parents and carers do not have to explain or give reasons for their request.

The right to withdraw complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Children evaluate collective worship several times a year. This may be carried out as an individual, as a small group or as a class, using the Pupil Voice sheet. Worship council evaluate worship on behalf of the school using a 'snowflake Activity' that gives a wider evaluation of collective worship as a whole.

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of the RE Lead and Headteacher.

Signed:

Mr L Williams (Headteacher)

Signed:

Mr Ian Chappell

On behalf of the Governing body

Ratified by the Governing Body: