Ickleford Primary School

Shared Values · Shared Aspirations · Shared Achievements

A Church of England School

Collective Worship Policy

Date adopted: Summer 2025
Review date: Summer 2027

Ickleford Primary School Christian Vision Statement
Founded in 1839, Ickleford Primary School continues to develop its distinctive Christian ethos in partnership with the Church of England, working within the Diocese of St Albans as expressed in our Trust Deed. The school and church remain united at the heart of the Christian mission, serving the local community with compassion and purpose.

We are committed to offering an education of the highest quality, rooted in Christian belief and practice, and shaped by a strong moral foundation whilst supporting pupils' spiritual development. We strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where every child can flourish academically, socially and spiritually.

Christian values are woven through every aspect of school life, helping pupils grow into resilient, reflective and compassionate individuals who contribute positively to society.

Ickleford Primary School's Christion Vision

Growing together in love and learning.

Inspired by Matthew 22, 37-38

Our Christian Values:

Love **Courage** **Forgiveness**

Joy **Service** **Thankfulness**

Ickleford School Vision Statement

We aspire to build a happy and inclusive community underpinned by core Christian values and those shared by other faiths. This will enable us to nurture resilient pupils with a passion for life-long learning, ensuring everyone's potential is fulfilled.

Ickleford Primary School Core Values

Ensuring a happy teaching environment

Building an inclusive community

Instilling values

Developing resilient pupils

Creating independent thinkers with a passion for learning

Collective Worship as an Expression of Our Vision

At Ickleford Primary School, collective worship is a living expression of our theologically rooted Christian vision: *"Growing together in love and learning,"* inspired by Jesus' teaching in Matthew 22:37-38 *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."* In this passage, Jesus places love at the very heart of life and learning and this call to love shapes all that we do.

Our acts of collective worship provide opportunities for pupils and adults to reflect on what it means to love God, love themselves, and love one another. Worship is carefully planned around our Christian values and the seasons of the Anglican year, creating space for the school community to gather, grow spiritually and live out our shared values of love, courage, forgiveness, joy, service and thankfulness.

By structuring our worship using the GERS model (Gather, Engage, Respond, Send), we ensure that our times together are inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Worship enables us to live out our vision by nurturing a compassionate, inclusive and spiritually vibrant community where every individual is valued, encouraged to flourish and challenged to make a positive difference to the world.

Policy Statement

As a Church school, worship is an affirmation and celebration of our Christian ethos where children have the opportunity to learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. Worship in our school is not simply a statutory duty. It is the heartbeat of our school life: a time to gather together, reaffirm our vision and associated values and celebrate the central role that each pupil and adult have to play in our community.

Our acts of collective worship reflect the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of 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 (see our Spirituality Policy).

The aims and purpose of collective worship as defined by the Education Reform Act 1988 are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for the children to worship God
- To enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs
- To encourage participation and response
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes

The Legal Requirements

We seek to comply with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on each school day take part in an act of collective worship.

- The daily act of collective worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- All acts of collective worship in Church schools must be Christian in character. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for worship such as the whole school, year groups, tutor groups, classes, or other combinations.
- Acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils in that they should take account of the pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds.
- The daily act of collective worship will normally take place on the school site but all schools are able to hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church St Katharine's) on special occasions.
- Responsibility for the arrangement of collective worship in a Church of England school rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the headteacher.

Principles of Collective Worship

Each adult and pupil will experience worship that is truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality (see Church of England's Collective Worship Guidance).[1] 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.

Implementation

In addition to the above, we seek to provide acts of collective worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England. Therefore:

We use the Bible as a sourcebook for inspiration and learning and make pupils familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other verses of scripture. We also introduce them to a variety of well-known prayers – many of which express the central beliefs of Christians throughout the ages.

We use aspects of Anglican liturgy to create a framework for worship of GERS: gather, engage, respond and send. We observe the cycle of the Anglican year including celebrations of the major Christian festivals.

At Ickleford Primary School, we aim to provide a worship space which is attractive and well

[1] https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf

prepared with appropriate thought having been given to colour, space, seating, ambience and music.

We foster links with St Katharine's Church, involving the Reverend Mary Fane de Salis and Reverend Margaret Holford in leading collective worship and providing coherence between worship in church and school. The school community visit at least four times per year as part of the Christian calendar – Harvest, Christmas, Easter and our Leavers' Service.

We recognise that different members of our school community spiritually reflect in different ways. Music, story, silence, prayer, drama and other approaches are incorporated within a varied collective worship offer.

Connections with other Christian denominations and faiths

We recognise that while some of our pupils and families belong to Anglican churches, many worship regularly at churches of other Christian denominations, while others come from different faith backgrounds or none. We endeavour to provide a setting in which the integrity of those present is not compromised, where everyone finds something positive for themselves and there is no pressure to participate inappropriately or to believe.

Rights and Responsibilities

As established by the 1944 Act and reinforced through this policy, parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we hope that all pupils will participate in collective worship, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child will discuss this with the headteacher before making their decision. Following these discussions, any desire to formally withdraw pupils from worship must be done via a letter to the Headteacher. In response, appropriate arrangements would be made in keeping with the Act.

Planning

Planning for collective worship is led by the headteacher and is undertaken in consultation with the school staff and clergy. Plans follow the cycle of the Anglican year, our Christian values, people who have lead fruitful lives and world events. The headteacher ensures that leaders and visiting speakers receive copies of the long-term plans. Individuals and groups are responsible for using the plans as a basis for developing their own short term plans for individual acts of worship.

When planning a collective worship staff follow the GERS framework:

Gathering: As children gather for worship, they may be encouraged to join in with song as they enter, or simply to listen to music. A distinctive atmosphere and clearly visible focus point is important. At Ickleford Primary School, we have a collective worship table upon which is a worship colour, a red, white, green or purple fabric covering to match the liturgical colour of the Church Year that is spread out to help create the sense of a special or for some, sacred space.

Upon that are three objects that symbolise the Trinitarian nature of God: The Holy Trinity

God the Father,
God the Son and
God the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is understood by Christians to be the word of God. The Cross symbolising the person of Jesus, is placed in the centre of the table to show Jesus at the heart of the school's community life together. A candle is lit and the flame symbolises the Holy Spirit. The person/s (adult, children or visitor) leading the collective worship greets everyone with a smile and a familiar welcome or liturgical greeting which may require a response.

Engaging: This may be the main part of the collective worship, in terms of input by the person/s leading. It may be a children's story, a story from the Bible or story from the life of one of the saints or people who have led fruitful lives in the Christian tradition. They may offer an event in the news or an inspirational person from history or present day to consider. There is room for spontaneity. They may explore drama/role-play scenarios or answer a quiz. Respect is shown to all pupils and the celebration of shared values and beliefs.

Singing, indeed music in general, is important to the school's acts of collective worship. We select our songs/hymns carefully to match the theme. During collective worship through song, we reflect more deeply upon the words of the song.

Whatever is chosen should both fit the theme for worship and be appropriate for the age, aptitudes and backgrounds of the pupils where they can get to grips with the heart of the matter, interacting with stories, people and ideas. Pupils will be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to agree and disagree; to participate and stand back; and to consider.

Responding: for every person present, some response should be possible. All should be respectful and understand that this time is set aside for deep thought and for each to respond in an appropriate way.

At Ickleford Primary School, we clearly and carefully offer the opportunity to reflect and/or pray by person/s leading saying 'time to think time to pray'. It is inviting, never compelling. If children wish to assume a prayer position or not, we expect all to close their eyes and listen respectfully. Pupils are not required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. It might include prayers the children have written themselves as well as a collection of identified prayers e.g. The Lord's Prayer, which the children should encounter before they leave school. Occasionally, there is time for silent prayer or reflection where children are able to focus their thoughts or respond in a personal way.

Once a week children are offered the opportunity to lead intercessions. At the front of the hall, six cards are laid out with images to represent the world, King and country, the sick, our school, our family and friends, and ourselves. On entering the hall, a child may choose to sit by the card with an intercession idea ready to share about that theme. After offering their thought, they lead with 'God in heaven' and the other children may respond with 'hear my prayer'.

Sending: A set ritual for leaving collective worship is completed by extinguishing the candle before or after the sending out. The ending of the act of worship should be full of purpose, as people are sent out to be different, to 'do' differently and to live a life that makes a difference in the world. We sometimes leave singing as it can establish a sense of purpose.

Organisation

An act of collective worship is held daily. This may involve the whole school or class groups or key stage groups. Where collective worship forms part of an assembly, we ensure that there is a clear distinction between the two elements of gathering.

The headteacher, other members of staff, and once a half term, the collective worship team, take

turns to conduct collective worship. The local vicars, Reverend Mary Fane de Salis or Reverend Margaret Holford takes collective worship on a weekly basis.

We conduct collective worship in a dignified and respectful way expecting children to behave appropriately. We create a suitable atmosphere by using lights, music, pictures or other artefacts to act as a focal point.

Our current weekly timetable is structured so that planning follows sequentially throughout the week.

Monday
Whole school collective worship led by the headteacher or deputy headteacher. A new value for the half term, theme, concept, or big question is introduced to guide thinking and reflection for the week.

Tuesday
Whole school collective worship led by a class teacher on a rota. This builds on Monday's introduction, offering deeper exploration of the week's key ideas through stories, discussion, and reflection.

Wednesday
Whole school collective worship led by the headteacher or the local incumbent. This session revisits and develops the week's theme, often drawing on biblical teaching and Christian perspectives.

Thursday
Whole school collective worship through music and song, offering opportunities for joyful praise. Intercessions are spontaneously created and led by the pupils, encouraging personal reflection and shared prayer.

Friday
'Friday Fellowship', led by the headteacher or deputy headteacher, is a joyful celebration of our school community. We recognise achievements, celebrate one another and reflect on how we have lived out our values in action throughout the week.

Class Collective Worship

If whole school collective worship is not physically possible, class collective worships are held in each classroom following the plans provided.

Wild Worship: Outdoor Pupil-Led Worship

At Ickleford Primary School, *Wild Worship* is our half-termly outdoor, pupil-led act of worship, connecting us with God's creation and the seasons. Linked to key points in the Church calendar, such as Ascension, Pentecost, Armistice, and Wassail, these sessions invite children to reflect, pray and celebrate in nature.

Rooted in our Christian ethos, *Wild Worship* uses the familiar *GERS* structure (Gather, Engage, Respond, Send) in an inclusive and creative way. Pupils help plan and lead these sessions, deepening their spiritual leadership and understanding of Christian festivals. Through this practice, we celebrate God as Creator, nurture awe and thankfulness and encourage stewardship of the world around us.

Summer Term Class Assemblies

We invite parents to class assemblies, in the summer term. These are not acts of collective worship but a celebration of the work the children have completed throughout the year.

Resources

The budget for collective worship is distinct from the budget for Religious Education. There is a wide selection of collective worship books from Imaginor and artefacts which we regularly update and improve. The school also uses online planning resources from other publishers and dioceses to support their planning. We have a collection of CDs which are used to provide suitable music as children enter and leave the hall as well as to accompany singing. Those leading worship also access professional development opportunities.

Collective Worship Team

The Collective Worship Team is made up of pupils from KS2, who volunteer themselves to take on this special leadership opportunity, within our school. Each half term, the team introduces a themed prayer space that reflects our school values and current worship focus. These spaces are thoughtfully created to offer all pupils a quiet, reflective area where they can pause, pray, or simply take a moment to think around the school. The team proudly presents each new prayer space during collective worship, explaining its meaning and how others can engage with it. Through their creativity, service and leadership, these pupils help to make spirituality accessible and meaningful for everyone in our school community.

The Collective Worship Team also helps to plan and lead our termly *Wild Worship* sessions, encouraging the whole school to worship outdoors and connect with key moments in the Church calendar through nature and the outdoors.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

We recognise that although SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of collective worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area. For example, children will be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate the deeper meanings of life, consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness, appreciate the contributions of others and respond to their needs, value their own culture and the cultures of others.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We aim to develop the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of collective worship by continuing to keep records created by the headteacher. The headteacher, clergy and foundation governors routinely observe and monitor acts of collective worship. Feedback is gathered from pupils on the impact of collective worship on their learning and its application in their lives. This feedback plays an essential part in developing the spiritual growth of our school community. The impact of collective worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).

Inclusion

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make collective worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs when appropriate. This includes some signing of hymns and prayers.

Implementation of Policy

The headteacher as collective worship lead is responsible for this policy which will be reviewed every two years. Its implementation is the responsibility of all those planning and leading collective worship.

Review
This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Links to Other Policies:

- Spirituality Policy