

Collective Worship Policy



Inclusive Invitational Inspiring
Spring 2023

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.

At West Felton CofE Primary School, 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 aim for our worship to 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.

Inclusive

Worship at West Felton is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. 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 school 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 is 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.

Invitational

Our pupils 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**' 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 are always 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.

** 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*

Inspiring

Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter at West Felton CofE Primary School to be inspirational. Worship is formational and transformational: it enables pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It motivates 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, our pupils and adults will be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes.

We recognise the right of withdrawal from Collective worship. This should be tendered in writing to the headteacher.

Collective worship at West Felton CofE Primary School will:

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as kindness, dignity, aspiration and community and will 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 and reflection.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

Provision

Collective Worship takes place every day at West Felton CofE Primary School, in a variety of formats including clergy led Worship, Key Stage Worship and Class Worship – often led by the pupils and whole school Worship led by the SLT. Our Worship follows a set of Christian Values, outlined by the Church of England and by our school values. We will also meet to celebrate and mark certain seasons in the Church calendar, such as Lent and Advent. This may take place at school or at St. Michael's Church.

Developing staff expertise and knowledge

- 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, we have prioritised the development of those facilitating collective worship in Church schools.
- Worship leaders, including clergy, have access to regular training, through our local diocesan education teams.
- Pupil worship leaders are supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship.
- Our pupils regularly evaluate Worship and those facilitating worship should have the opportunity to receive feedback and the hear the outcome of evaluation.

Approved by: Governing Body Date: February 2022

Last reviewed on: 27th June 2023

Next review due by: February 2025