

West Exmoor Federation



Collective Worship Policy

Revised March 2025

West Exmoor Federation – Collective Worship Policy

Vision and Values Statement and Introduction

Our Collective Worship is carried out within the context and spirit of the federation's Vision and Values Statement. It supports and reinforces the aims of the schools within our federation, that of forming an inclusive community to enable:

'Educating with love, for life in all its fullness'

Our vision is driven by a strong moral purpose and embodied within our CARIS values of:

Curiosity Achievement Respect Inspiration Support

Love is at the heart of all we do.

A love of learning; love for ourselves and those around us; a love of our environment; and a love of our Christian distinctiveness.

Our federation values have been chosen by our children who have decided that curiosity, achievement, respect, inspiration and support (CARIS) are those values by which we should live our daily lives. CARIS, meaning love, is at the heart of all that we do and is directly linked to the following scripture:

CARIS - Corinthians 13:7

Curiosity – Ephraim (Matthew 2:2)

Achievement – Seed Parables (Matthew 13:8)

Respect – Jesus washes the disciples feet (John 13:15)

Inspiration – Letting your light shine (Matthew 5:16)

Support – Good Samaritan (Luke 10:27)

Across our federation, our vision and values are central to our Christian ethos and all teaching and learning; as such, they are integral to our Collective Worship. Our federation's vision gives high priority to the spiritual, and moral development of all in its care. We encourage our children to develop their Christian character through our CARIS values, enabling them to become their very best selves and enjoy life in all its fullness. These values underpin our understanding and promotion of the British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We are exceptionally proud of the people that our children become as they travel through our federation: confident, self-motivated and compassionate with a moral purpose grounded in respect and integrity. As courageous advocates for all around them, they demonstrate a genuine belief in their power to become the change that they wish to see.

Our Vision and Values are reinforced through a shared, daily act of worship, led by staff, children or visitors to the federation. Collective Worship, within a Christian context, plays an important part in the life of our schools. It is an oasis in the school day when children meet together with members of staff in calm and peaceful atmosphere and where all present are given the opportunity to reflect and participate. It is regarded as 'quality' time and represents something special or separate from ordinary school routine.

Definitions

Worship: can be defined as paying homage to that which is of worth. Religious Worship is the acknowledgement of 'worth' which is attributable to a supreme being. Worth can also be registered in other people and in values and attitudes.

School Assembly: is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself.

Corporate Worship: is a gathering of a body ('corpus') of believers and presupposes a particular religious commitment.

Collective Worship: is a gathering of a 'collection' of people of diverse, religious, agnostic and non-religious backgrounds and does not pre-suppose any particular religious commitment.

NB: We note that Collective Worship and Assembly are not one and the same thing. They are, in essence, different from each other, but in practice they often overlap.

Rationale

Collective Worship is carried out in accordance with the principles and practices of the Church of England and will, therefore, be wholly Christian in character. The 1988 Education Reform Act states that Collective Worship should be part of a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of children and society. All maintained schools, whether a church or community school, must provide a daily act of Collective Worship for all registered children.

Collective Worship:-

- gives children the opportunity to enter into experiences which lie at the heart of religion. These experiences help them to learn about religious worship and provide a framework for later understanding;
- fosters a reverential attitude to God, the Divine, the transcendent;
- encourages children to consider fundamental questions about the purpose of being and about moral and ethical stances;
- provides an opportunity, for those who can use it, to participate in religious worship;
- allows us to learn and celebrate values we hold to be important;
- brings children together, enabling them to experience the security of belonging to a community with an identity of its own;
- is the source of much interesting and thought provoking knowledge;
- offers pleasurable expression through literature, art, music and drama;
- makes an important, though not exclusive, contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Aims and Principles

"Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for children to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes." (DfEE – Circular 1/94)

The following principles guide our approach to Collective Worship:

- Collective Worship should have a sense of occasion;
- Collective Worship should provide experiences within which children's spiritual development may flourish;
- Collective Worship should be a means of expressing the vision and values of the federation;
- Collective Worship should be educational and should contribute to the Religious Education of all children;
- Collective Worship should be shaped to the needs of the school (time, place, content, style etc.);
- We should provide a varied pattern of worship to broaden children's experience of its different forms;
- Collective Worship should recognise that the schools within the federation include children from different religious and non-religious backgrounds;
- During Collective Worship some will be worshipping and some will be experiencing something approaching worship; others will be finding out what it is like to worship by being with those who are.

Objectives

The objectives of Collective Worship are to:-

- affirm the Christian faith and the Christian status of Jesus as Son of God;
- introduce children to the practice of religious worship through music, art, story, poetry, movement and prayer;

- create a warm, caring and respectful atmosphere in assemblies, conducive to worship; including the manner of entry and exit;
- encourage a thoughtful and reflective attitude;
- help children experience a sense of awe, wonder, reverence and inner stillness;
- enable children to use silence for reflection and contemplation;
- raise children's curiosity about the ultimate mysteries of life;
- enable children to learn about and consider in depth Christian teaching Christian festivals and biblical material;
- help children appreciate that we are 'stewards' of God's world;
- enable children to reflect upon their own beliefs in relation to those of others;
- enhance children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- guide children towards the spiritual and religious options open to them;
- help children distinguish between right and wrong;
- affirm children's personal worth and responsibility;
- celebrate individual and collective achievements;
- develop a sense of community within the schools and across the federation;
- celebrate religious festivals and special occasions with specified worship.

Management of Collective Worship

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Foundation of Lynton and Parracombe School is honoured and that the worship policy is firmly based upon the intentions set down in the Trust Deed;
- Ensuring that the Collective Worship Policy is put into practice and monitored by the appropriate Governor;
- Engaging an appropriate inspector to carry out the SIAMS Inspection of a church school alongside the OFSTED Inspection (Lynton and Parracombe) and support the Section 5 Inspection (Kentisbury).

The Collective Worship Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Managing worship on a day to day basis, ensuring that all legal requirements are complied with;
- Keeping in touch with national developments in school worship and acts in an advisory capacity, supporting colleagues.

Monitoring and evaluating of Collective Worship is an on-going process carried out on a weekly and termly basis so that effective review can take place by the appointed date.

Organisation of Collective Worship

Daily acts of Collective Worship take place in the school hall or within classrooms. Each half term, an aspect of our CARIS values forms the basis of Collective Worship. The structure of assemblies will include some/all of the following: music, a song of praise, a story or talk, a reading from the Bible, a period of reflection, a prayer, the Lord's Prayer, the school prayer and a reminder about the CARIS value and associated Bible story.

Staff are expected to attend Collective Worship. The schools worship in church on the occasions such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Transition (school leaver's service). Parents/carers and the wider community are invited to join in with these services. Visitors and outside speakers are invited to lead our worship on a regular basis.

Elements of Worship

"There are times when worship will be quiet, contemplative and serene and others when laughter, music and dance will be the appropriate form of expression."

Atmosphere is all-important in creating the right foundation for Collective Worship. Quiet, orderly behaviour and respectful attitudes on entering, leaving and throughout the assembly are expected. Staff enhance the atmosphere by their presence and participation.

Music may be played at the beginning and end of the assembly. Each half term a different musician is selected to illustrate a specific CARIS value and/or reinforce courageous advocacy. Children's' attention is drawn to musician throughout the half term.

Stories and talks are carefully chosen to fulfill the objectives of Collective Worship. Stories of a religious or secular nature may be used whilst personal anecdote from children, teachers and visitors is effective in expressing that which is important in our own lives. Particular emphasis is laid upon helping children to understand themselves better, to develop empathy and to consider moral issues and inequalities.

Songs are chosen from a wide variety of traditional and modern hymns and choruses. Some songs are learned by heart and actions are incorporated, whilst others are displayed on the interactive whiteboard. Hymns and songs create the opportunity for children to express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to put into words; and they provide a real source of pleasure.

Prayer and reflection are the most personal part of an act of worship. Collective Worship in school should provide opportunities for children to be taken to the threshold of prayer, and to cross it if they wish, in a way that respects the integrity of all present. Participation in prayer can never be imposed but we stress the need for stillness, reflection and respect for others. Silence, written prayers, impromptu prayers, The Lord's Prayer, children's prayers and the school prayer may be used. A large candle is lit and provides a focus for children's' thoughts. Reflection and thinking time are given some direction by the leader in order to concentrate children's' response. Scripture sentences may be quoted from the Bible and, where appropriate, from sacred books and writings of other world faiths. Longer passages may be used as readings.

Presentation sets the tone within the act of worship. In keeping with the reverent atmosphere, use is also made of visual aids, artifacts, drama, demonstration and video.

Content

Planning for Collective Worship is facilitated by the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship, with suggestions and input from staff and the incumbent welcomed. A Google Drive Document is shared with all to enable collegiate planning. Each half term, a different aspect of CARIS is explored as follows:

Autumn A – Love	Autumn B – Curiosity
Spring A – Achievement	Spring B – Respect
Summer A – Inspiration	Summer B – Support

Links with the Liturgical Calendar, world festivals, R.E. and the Curriculum are incorporated wherever possible, as are links with local, national and world events.

N.B. No worship programme can ever be entirely pre-planned. There will always be the spontaneous moment or occasion when it is important, spiritually, to focus on the immediate, so that children become aware of how the spiritual dimension transcends all our experience.

Resources

- Staff, children, visiting speakers
- Prayer table including selection of religious artifacts and a candle and cross as a focal point
- Selection of assembly topic books for teachers
- Selection of assembly song books including Come and Praise, PopUK
- Manic Street Teachers for Muscian of the Half Term resources
- Interactive Whiteboards
- Piano and other instruments

Records and Assessment

Outline half-termly planning for Collective Worship is held on Google Drive. Records of individual collective worship sessions is recorded by children and/or adults in a Collective Worship book held in each school. Monitoring of Collective Worship is carried out by the Ethos Committee and includes:-

- checking that practice matches aims and objectives;
- observation of children's attentiveness and level of interest;
- classroom feedback from children, both written and verbal;
- comments from parents, visitors and governors;
- the extent of the influence upon children's attitude and behaviour throughout the school day;
- self-evaluation/comment by the teachers;
- staff meetings are used for discussion and the update of information as and when necessary.

Equal Opportunities

All children have equal opportunity to take part in Collective Worship and to benefit from the experience. The federation prospectus inform parents of their right to withdraw children from Collective Worship. Such children are fully supervised in another part of the school.

Multiculturalism

A variety of multicultural material is available throughout the schools within the federation. Stories are shared and festivals acknowledged in accordance with the major faiths represented within our society. Tolerance and understanding of all world faiths is nurtured.

Special Assemblies and Visitors

Within a Christian context, special assemblies are held for Harvest, Christmas, Easter and End of the School Year. Parents, Governors and visitors are especially welcome to attend. Occasionally outside speakers, such as representatives from charitable organisations, will lead these assemblies.

Review

The Governing Body will review this policy bi-annually from the date of its adoption. Informal Review may be necessary in the interim and should take place as and when required.

Reviewed: March 2025