



# Policy Document

Ditton Church of England Junior School

## Collective Worship Policy

January 2025

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**In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. We aspire for ourselves and others; We believe in ourselves, others and in God; We care for ourselves, our community and the wider world.**

‘Collective Worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

## **Policy Statement**

At Ditton C of E Junior School worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school’s vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Ditton C of E Junior School collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. We look at a big question every week which we link all learning back to and use as a diver for questioning and reflection.





Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

## Church of England Guidance

Collective worship policy at Ditton C of E Junior School draws on guidance from the Church of England. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

## Legal Requirements

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at anytime in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in Ditton C of E Junior School, should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The trustees and governing body school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.





## The right of withdrawal

In Ditton C of E Junior School there are some of children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non- religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve.

As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much



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Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

(This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.)

## Guiding Principles

Collective worship in Ditton C of E Junior aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief



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- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well know Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

## Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community



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We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

## How Collective worship is organised

The organisation of Collective Worship should be listed here under the headings

### Leadership

- Collective worship is led by a range of staff across the week. SLT tend to lead and close each weeks collective worship around the big question, provided by the Picture News resource each week.
- Class worship takes place each Tuesday and allows children to develop and discuss from their viewpoint of the big question, allowing all children to have a voice and a say in the discussion.
- Wednesday worship is lead by the local vicar, Reverend Terranova, who links worship to key elements within the Christian calendar or themes within the diocese worship planning.
- Thursday will link back to the key question or theme for the week, often lead by a member of SLT or another member of teaching staff.
- Friday is when celebration worship takes place, along with class lead worships throughout the year. There will always be a link back to the key question which has been asked that week and an opportunity to reflect on the key themes from the week.

### Planning

Worship is planned weekly, within the guidelines of topics established within the picture news planning. Staff are able to contribute ideas to key themes within the week, information about each week of collective worship is shared prior to the week it takes place in, so staff are aware of the key themes that are approaching.



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## Roles and Responsibilities

- The governing body – oversee and monitor the effectiveness and impact of collective worship across the school.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team – plan and organise worship to reflect current themes and provide opportunity within the week for reflective and discussion.
- Teaching and support staff – are active participants in worship and have a voice in discussion and ideas, they encourage and engage others to discuss and share ideas and develop improvements.
- Pupils - are keen to share and engage with worship and develop their thinking and reflections to be positive and use each other and kagan structures to confidently talk about their worship experiences.
- Parents and carers – are encouraged to attend celebration worships and questions are shared each week with parents to engage them within the process of worship.

## Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Collective worship training is accessed through the diocese link and training is monitored for impact on in school practices.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of worship takes place through pupil voice and discussion with pupils. Children are encouraged to share positives and areas for development within the experience that they have each week.



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## Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

Other Useful Documents: (can be found on the diocesan website)

