



This policy has been written and agreed by the head teacher and the Governing Body, who have responsibility for worship at the school.

Our vision

This is the agreed vision statement of Christ Church School:



Christ Church School, Hampstead

A village school in London inspiring *life in all its fullness*

Jesus, The Good Shepherd, promises 'life in all its fullness'. (JOHN 10:10)

At Christ Church we believe every child and adult in our school should be able both to experience life in all its fullness now and to aspire to life in all its fullness in the future.

We all seek to inspire life in all its fullness for all in the school through:

- ensuring a **safe, welcoming and inclusive environment** for children and adults, where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to contribute and flourish;
- the pursuit of **academic excellence** in all areas, with a determined desire for each child to make the best possible progress as a result of high aspirations, hard work and the development of a personal love for learning alongside the highest-quality teaching and support;
- offering the widest possible **breadth of curriculum** both within school and through extra-curricular activities, enriched by the vast range of opportunities locally and across London;
- **creativity and positivity** in all we do, mixing innovation with tradition;
- planned and spontaneous opportunities for **spiritual development** through reflection, discussion and harnessing curiosity, as well as the provision, at the heart of our school life, of daily opportunities for prayer and worship;
- the development and modelling of **strong, positive and loving relationships**, with peers, amongst the school community and in the wider community;
- the promotion of **respect and compassion for ourselves and for all others**, by cultivating positive emotional and physical well-being, by celebrating the diversity within and outside our school and by encouraging all of us to be empowered global citizens, guided at all times by the example of Christ's compassion alongside the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- engendering a **sense of community and responsibility** for others and for our local and global environment and enjoying working together towards our common goals and expecting and valuing contributions from all.

Our vision comes to life through the school's five shared Christian values of **compassion, creativity, courage, simplicity and community**.

Our vision is for all in our school to experience *life in all its fullness* as promised by Jesus in John 10:10 and we believe that a key part of this is the spiritual development and flourishing of children and adults through reflection, discussion and harnessing curiosity, as well as through our prayer and collective worship. (See also our Spirituality document.)

Our worship

Our collective worship is at the heart of our school. The Christian character of our school is reflected in our regular worship as well as in the signs and symbols that are seen around our school; these include willow crosses made by children in all spaces around our school including in our entrance and a crucifix and banners representing our Christian vision and values in our Hall.

We believe that it is important to come together as a whole school to celebrate, discuss, share and think and also to praise, worship and pray together. In our school we have decided to continue to use the term 'assembly' to describe when we come together to worship each day. We believe that our assemblies, including our daily act of collective worship, engender a vital feeling of togetherness, enable all staff and children to hear and work towards the same aims and ideas and bring the community together in Christian worship. Our collective worship is one of the key ways in which we share and promote our school's Christian vision and values and encourage children and adults in our school community to bring these to life in our school and wider community.

Our act of collective worship is a very important part of the day at Christ Church. There are usually four elements to each act of worship:

- **gathering** - where we come together in the hall and church, preparing for worship through silence or listening to a music or reflecting on a question or image.
- **engagement** – where we engage with, discuss and think about an idea or story, based in Biblical text or teaching. This may include drama, story-telling, music, images, questions, talking to each other or other methods of capturing the imagination of the children and adults.
- **reflection or response** – a period of silence, reflection and/or prayer, where children and adults are invited to think about what they have heard or learnt and to join in prayer if they wish to.
- **sending out** – where everyone is dismissed from the hall or church, again to music, with a message to take out with them for the rest of the day and beyond. There is an expectation that adults in our school will refer back and make links to our collective worship themes or messages at other times and across the curriculum where relevant.

When planning acts of worship, we follow the Church of England and LDBS (London Diocesan Board for Schools) guidance to ensure that worship is:

- 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 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.

All of our worship is Christian, worshipping God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, following the traditions of the Church of England. Information about other faiths and beliefs is sometimes included in our assemblies.

We always try to sing a hymn as part of our act of worship as we believe this is an important part of praising God. We pray together every day as part of each act of collective worship: sometimes the Lord's Prayer or the school prayer, or prayers are led by a member of staff, a child or a member of the clergy. Prayers are also said at the end of the day in each class and before lunch (written and led by children).

Our assemblies take many forms and are led by different people and groups, including classes and groups of children, different members of staff and clergy from Christ Church. The school may, on occasion, invite other people to lead and contribute to our assemblies, including ministers from other churches and faiths. These arrangements are made with the approval of the head teacher and clergy at Christ Church and with the understanding that the collective worship element of the assembly will always follow the traditions of the Church of England.

Assemblies may include music, dance, drama, discussion, questions, Bible stories, other stories, poetry, facts, pictures and many other stimuli to introduce new ideas and to get everyone involved and thinking. We try to make our

assemblies as interactive, inclusive and inspiring as possible and make sure that both children of all ages and staff members are engaged and have something to reflect on.

All staff are expected to attend collective worship and, if necessary, to discuss and agree any occasional or regular alternative arrangements with the head teacher beforehand. Parents are invited to attend selected assemblies, especially when their children are involved. Governors are also welcome to attend.

Over many years, we have had full participation of our diverse school community in our inclusive assemblies, services and collective worship.

The head teacher is in charge of organising the collective worship arrangements and theme for each term, in collaboration with the clergy at Christ Church. The term's collective worship plan is shared and the theme and content of collective worship is part of each term's head teacher's report to governors.

The school's act of worship regularly takes place in Church, often linked with the Church's festivals. The head teacher and clergy also organise termly **services** in Christ Church for the whole school community to mark key points in the school and Christian calendar. As in our collective worship in school, children play important roles in these services singing, reading and sharing their writing and prayers.

Many families worship at Christ Church each week but there are also regular 'children in church' Sunday services in Christ Church each term where children play key roles in the service (readers, servers, school choir sings) and to which all families are especially invited and provide an opportunity for children and family members to experience and participate in the Eucharist.

Monitoring

The school's assemblies and acts of collective worship are monitored in the first instance by the head teacher, who reports to the clergy at Christ Church and the Governing Body. Children's views of our worship are sought in our regular pupil voice sessions. A Diocesan Worship and RE Inspection (SIAMS) takes place within a five-yearly cycle.

Legal requirements and parents' right to withdraw pupils

Legal requirement for collective worship:

- Should be conducted in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school and Instrument of Government and be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- Unless the right of withdrawal has been exercised all pupils must take part each day in an act of collective worship (DfE circular 1/94 para. 51) and the Governing Body should ensure that all pupils each day engage in a distinctively Christian act of worship.
- Arrangements for collective worship in foundation schools of a religious character (i.e. church schools) are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consultation with the headteacher (DfE Circular 1/94 para 52&53).

As a school, we recognise that a partnership with parents/carers is essential to help pupils flourish. Worship is regarded as special time in our school day where we gather as a school family. Reflecting our ethos as a Church of England school, collective worship is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none to be present with integrity.

We respect the legal right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of 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.

This policy will be reviewed by the full Governing Body every three years, or earlier if there is a change of head teacher at the school or priest at Christ Church.