



Christ Church School, Hampstead

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

Worship Policy

June 2026

This policy has been written and agreed by the head teacher and the Governing Body, who have responsibility for worship at the school. It is written with reference to the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) Collective Worship Policy document (2026).

Our vision

This is the agreed vision statement of Christ Church School:



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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, justice 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.

Collective worship and spiritual flourishing

Collective worship plays a key and unique part, in combination with our curriculum and wider personal development provision, in how we aim to provide for spiritual flourishing for all in our school.

In our Spirituality Document we set out our definition of spirituality:

At Christ Church we understand spirituality to be:

- **looking outwards** to appreciate and cherish the awe and wonder of the world
- **looking inwards** to reflect on our experiences and to explore life's big questions
- **looking onwards** to discover the meaning and impact of our lives for others and the world around us

In more detail, spirituality at Christ Church is:

looking outwards:

- developing an awareness of the concept of 'beyond' and the ability to explore experiences beyond the everyday
- an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful and, in relationships with others, of what is generous, creative and loving

looking inwards:

- exploring fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone
- the spirit of a person being seen through their acts of courage and perseverance and in their response to setbacks, praise and the unknown.
- each person's search for individual identity and for the values by which to live

looking onwards:

- searching for meaning in our very existence and our place in the greater scheme of things; developing a higher and deeper awareness and concern for others in the world around us; developing an understanding of 'belonging to something bigger'.

Collective worship plays a key role in enabling spiritual development and flourishing for both children and adults.

Examples of this include:

- providing moments of awe and wonder and opportunities to cherish the good or beautiful around us or between us
- prompting us to ask or consider big questions - questions which challenge or puzzle us, questions which have no right answer, asking us to search for meaning and purpose
- giving us opportunities to reflect on our own values, beliefs or behaviours and asking us to engage in conversations about God, both as individuals and together
- providing an encounter with faith
- giving us an understanding of the 'beyond' and/or of 'belonging to something bigger'

Our worship: introduction

The place of collective worship in Church of England schools is set out in the Church of England's vision for Education:

'We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way which enhances their lives...Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.' (Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good (2016))

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 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.

Aims of our collective worship

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, strengthen and **reaffirm our school's Christian identity, vision and values** and encourage children and adults in our school community to bring these to life in our school and wider community.

Further aims of collective worship:

- to offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- to 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
- to reflect the parish tradition of worship, while giving experience over time for pupils to experience the breadth of Anglicanism
- to enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship and festivals
- to give pupils the opportunity to make a positive contribution to worship through involvement with aspects of the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship

Legal requirements and parents' right to withdraw pupils

- 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.

The school must grant without question any request from a parent to withdraw their child. To enable clear communication, requests are to be made to the headteacher in writing, by email. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we hope that all pupils will participate in collective worship. This is supported by ensuring that prospective families are fully informed as to what collective worship is and how all present are invited to engage with it and benefit from it. If a pupil is withdrawn from collective worship, parents will have the opportunity to revisit and reconsider this decision.

The right of withdrawal would normally be through the physical withdrawal from the act of worship. Experience suggests that, to avoid misunderstanding, the headteacher will find it helpful to establish with the parent the practical implications of withdrawal. Alternative arrangements should not be used as an opportunity for additional curriculum time, but should ensure that the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural needs of the pupil are attended to. There is no requirement to provide an alternative 'assembly'. The school will keep a record of all those withdrawn and for how many sessions.

Planning and leading our collective worship

Collective worship is planned systematically, using both long- and short-term plans, which enables continuity and cohesion. 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 theme and content of collective worship is part of each term's head teacher's report to governors.

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.

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.

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 way to come together and 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 the head teacher, 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. These arrangements are made with the approval of the head teacher and clergy at Christ Church and it is the responsibility of senior leaders in the school to ensure that all visitors who are leading worship have read this policy and have been properly briefed about the school, its context and our school vision. All those regularly leading worship in our school have access to regular diocesan-led training.

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 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 two 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

Our school regularly evaluates assemblies and collective worship and the impact they have on pupils and adults within the school community. This involved monitoring by school leaders and governors and takes place both formally and informally. Children's views of our worship are sought in our regular pupil voice sessions and staff views are sought in feedback discussions with governors and with diocesan advisers. This feedback plays an essential part in developing the spiritual growth of our school community and key findings are reported back to the whole governing body.

The impact of collective worship is also independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS), with specific regard to the inspection question: IQ3: How is daily collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?

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.