



Moordown St. John's CE Primary School

# Policy for Worship & Spirituality

*Based on the Diocese of Winchester model  
'Collective Worship' Policy*

**"A Christian community where commitment to  
educational excellence changes lives"**

The Board of Directors of Moordown St. Johns CE Primary School ratified this policy on September 2026.

Review Date: September 2029

A copy of this policy in an alternative format, such as large print or different language,  
may be provided on request from the school office.

## 1. Purpose and foundation

Collective worship is at the heart of life at Moordown St John's. It is a daily opportunity for pupils and adults to gather as a school family, encounter the Christian faith, reflect on life and faith, pray or be still, and consider how what we have explored might shape the way we live.

As a Church of England school, our worship reflects the Anglican foundation of the school and is shaped by our theologically rooted Christian vision. It is distinctively Christian while being invitational, inclusive and inspirational, welcoming pupils and adults of all faiths and none.

## 2. Our Christian vision

**Rooted in God's love, we believe everyone can grow to be their Blossoming BEST in a caring, Christian community.**

**We encourage each other to belong, excel, shine and thrive so we can love learning, care for others and make a positive difference in the world.**

Our vision is underpinned by Luke 2:52: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and people." It expresses our commitment to the flourishing of the whole child:

- **BELONG** in God's love – growing in understanding of who we are, how we belong, and our role in God's creation.
- **EXCEL** in wisdom – growing in knowledge, curiosity and a love of learning.
- **SHINE** with others – growing in confidence, compassion and character; building positive relationships.
- **THRIVE** in body and life – growing in strength and resilience through healthy, active lifestyles.

The **Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23)** – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control – helps us understand the character we seek to grow and the way we live, learn and serve together.

## 3. Worship and our vision

Worship makes the Christian vision visible and lived. Across the year, pupils encounter key biblical narratives, Christian beliefs, the life and teaching of Jesus, the Church year and Anglican traditions.

Our four anchor stories help pupils connect the vision with Scripture:

| BEST                                      | Anchor story                                | Key emphasis                                                                                                                                                   |  |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Belong<br>Spiritual development           | The Lost Sheep – Luke 15:1–7                | Everyone belongs, is valued and loved.<br><br><b>Fruit of the Spirit:</b><br>Love, Joy, Gentleness                                                             |                                                                                       |
| Excel<br>Cognitive development            | Wise and Foolish Builders – Matthew 7:24–27 | Wisdom grows through listening, learning and applying.<br><br><b>Fruit of the Spirit:</b><br>Goodness, Self-Control                                            |                                                                                       |
| Shine<br>Social and emotional development | Jesus Calms the Storm – Mark 4:35–41        | We can trust God in difficult times and we can help and care for others when they are worried or afraid.<br><br><b>Fruit of the Spirit:</b><br>Peace, Kindness |                                                                                       |
| Thrive<br>Physical development            | The Mustard Seed – Matthew 13:31–32         | Growth, hope and becoming a blessing to others.<br><br><b>Fruit of the Spirit:</b><br>Patience, Faithfulness                                                   |                                                                                       |



## 4. Aims of collective worship

Through collective worship we aim to:

- enable pupils and adults to flourish spiritually through reflection, wonder, questioning, stillness, prayer and response;
- deepen understanding of the school's Christian vision and its biblical and theological roots;
- develop biblical literacy by revisiting important narratives, concepts and the wider Christian story rather than presenting disconnected moral lessons;
- encounter Christian beliefs about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and learn about the life and teaching of Jesus;
- experience prayer, worship through music, silence, reflection, biblical readings and familiar Anglican words and responses;
- mark the seasons and festivals of the Christian year and develop understanding of Anglican traditions, including liturgical colours and symbols;
- create space for pupils and adults to explore meaning, purpose, identity, hope, relationships and responsibility;
- encourage thoughtful action: loving learning, caring for others and making a positive difference in the world;
- provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to contribute to, lead and evaluate worship.

## 5. How we achieve our aims – invitational, inclusive and inspirational

Worship is offered as an invitation, not a requirement to make a particular faith response. Leaders use language such as "you may like to...", "I invite you to..." and "Christians believe...". Pupils may join in prayer, listen, reflect quietly or use the time to think about what matters to them. Questions, uncertainty and different perspectives are treated with respect.

Worship is planned so that pupils of different ages, backgrounds, faiths, SEND and levels of English can participate meaningfully. Christian language and symbolism are explained rather than assumed. Inclusion does not dilute the Christian character of worship; it enables everyone to encounter it with integrity.

Worship should also be inspirational: engaging hearts and minds and having the potential to influence thinking, relationships and action beyond the worship itself. Inspirational worship may include:

- Creating a sense of occasion and reverence
- Providing opportunities that develop pupil's awareness of what is beautiful, good, wonderful, awesome and puzzling in life experience
- Arranging worship at different places when possible, different times with different people and groupings, involving all members of the community at some time
- Using a wide range of resources, artefacts (from religious and secular sources), music, art, drama and external visitors to engage children's interest
- Encouraging children to participate and experience different styles of worship, e.g. prayer, praise, silence, rituals, and become familiar with the language of worship, Biblical readings and liturgy
- Providing opportunities for children and adults to reflect, contemplate their own thoughts, feelings and beliefs
- Involving young children and members of the wider community, especially including local clergy, to participate in collective worship and activities within the parish
- Through providing a peaceful environment enabling stillness, reflection and prayer as well as times for a joyous environment with singing, music, dance, drama, etc

## 6. Central attributes of an act of worship

Most acts of worship follow the Church of England suggested pattern below. Leaders may adapt the pattern where this strengthens the quality and integrity of worship.

| Stage   | Purpose                                                                                                                                               |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gather  | Create a sense of special time and space through welcome, music, a focal point, candle, cross, Bible, stillness or liturgical greeting.               |
| Engage  | Explore the theme through Scripture and Christian teaching, using stories, drama, images, objects, questions, music, visitors or pupil contributions. |
| Respond | Provide genuine time to think, wonder, pray, discuss, be silent or respond creatively. Make links with Self, Others, World and Beyond.                |
| Send    | Draw together the key message and invite pupils and adults to carry it into daily life, often through prayer, blessing or a familiar response.        |

## 7. Centrality of Prayer and Worship

Prayer is central to Christian worship at MSJ and is always invitational. Pupils encounter a range of forms including shared prayers, pupil-written prayers, spontaneous prayer, silence, reflection, the Lord's Prayer and familiar blessings such as the Grace. Over time, pupils are helped to understand what prayer means to Christians and how it may be used in individual and communal life.

There will also be appropriate opportunities for prayer and other worship activities, including reflection, outside of collective worship.

## 8. Spirituality and Worship

We understand spirituality as a fundamental part of being human: the inner life through which people explore meaning, identity, belonging, purpose, wonder, hope, relationships and, for Christians and other believers, relationship with God. Spirituality is not limited to religion and may be expressed using religious or non-religious language.

Within our Christian vision, every person is uniquely created and deeply loved by God. Spiritual development is therefore integral to our understanding of flourishing and is especially visible within BELONG, while permeating all aspects of Blossoming BEST and the wider curriculum.

## 9. Our shared framework for spiritual development

We use four lenses to give pupils and adults a shared language for recognising and exploring spiritual moments. The framework supports, rather than restricts, natural opportunities for spiritual development across worship, the curriculum and everyday school life.

| Lens   | Symbol | What it helps us explore                                                                                                         |
|--------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SELF   | Mirror | Our feelings, experiences, identity, questions and what we are learning about ourselves.                                         |
| OTHERS | Candle | The worth of other people, empathy, relationships, compassion, influence and service.                                            |
| WORLD  | Window | The 'wows' and 'ows' of the world: beauty, wonder, suffering, injustice and our place within creation.                           |
| BEYOND | Door   | Meaning, faith, God and transcendence, and the response that may follow through changed thinking, choices, creativity or action. |

Spiritual development is progressive. A younger child may experience and name a moment of wonder; an older pupil should increasingly be able to question, make connections, consider different interpretations and express a thoughtful response.

## 10. Spiritual development across school life

Spiritual development is not confined to collective worship or RE. Staff notice and, where helpful, create opportunities across the curriculum and school life for pupils to:

- notice, wonder and ask significant questions;
- reflect on feelings, experiences, beliefs and values;
- encounter beauty, creativity, suffering, injustice and the complexity of the world;
- consider the perspectives and experiences of others;
- explore meaning, purpose, hope, faith and questions about God;
- respond through changed thinking, choices, relationships, creativity, prayer, service or courageous advocacy.
- further ideas and suggestions about the opportunities for spiritual development, can also be seen in our annual '**Blossoming Best**' Charter

### 10.1 Prayer and reflective spaces around the school



The school has a '**Peace Garden**' to engage and promote reflection by individual children and adults. At certain times, older pupils are designated as 'Peace Ambassadors' and they help organise reflective activities such as colouring.

Weather permitting, classes are encouraged to hold their class worship in the '**courtyard garden**', which has an outdoor seating area.

**Each classroom has a designated area** for reflection and prayer, which will include a cross, prayer book, candle and the Lord's Prayer. Many classes also write their own lunchtime and end of the day prayers. Children are free to use this space during class worship or when they have unstructured learning time.

Each classroom also has a **spirituality board** with the 4 labels: Self, Others, World and Beyond. These display awe and wonder / quiet reflections moments from across the year to further support individuals in their spiritual self-awareness.

## 11. Planning and organisation

Collective worship takes place daily and is planned systematically to provide continuity, progression, variety and a clear Christian focus.

Our usual weekly pattern follows a Big Picture – Digging Deeper – Living It Out approach. This enables pupils to encounter a shared Christian message, explore it at an age-appropriate level and consider what it might mean for their own lives, relationships and the wider world.

| Day                                 | Usual pattern                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday – Big Picture                | <b>Whole-school worship</b> , usually led by the Headteacher, introduces the week's key theme, Bible story or Christian teaching and connects it with our vision.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Tuesday & Thursday – Digging Deeper | <b>Key Stage worship</b> explores the Big Picture in greater depth. Content and questions are adapted to pupils' age and understanding, providing opportunities to explore Scripture, Christian belief, spirituality and different perspectives.                                                                                                                     |
| Wednesday – Living It Out           | <b>Class worship</b> provides time to recall and reflect on the week's learning and consider its significance for Self, Others, World and Beyond. Pupils are encouraged to consider how the message might influence their thinking, choices, relationships or actions.<br><br>Time is also regularly given to explore a <b>Trickbox and/or zones of regulation</b> . |

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday – Celebration | <b>Whole-school worship</b> , including regular involvement from St John's clergy, draws the school family together in worship and celebration. It provides an opportunity to revisit the week's learning and celebrate pupils living out our vision. |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Worship is led by a variety of people that include school staff, pupils, directors, representatives from the parish church, members of different faith communities and members of the local community.

## 12. Pupil participation and leadership

Pupil leadership is more than reading a prayer. As pupils grow in confidence and understanding, they are given opportunities to contribute to planning, lead prayers and reflections, read Scripture, use drama or music, lead parts of class and whole-school worship, help shape church services and evaluate worship.

School Parliament and other pupil leadership groups may also connect worship with service, justice and action.

## 13. Monitoring, evaluation and impact

The quality and impact of worship are monitored by school leaders, pupils, staff, Directors and clergy. Evaluation focuses on whether worship is distinctively Christian, invitational, inclusive and inspirational; whether it supports spiritual flourishing; and whether pupils can make connections between worship, the school vision and daily life.

Feedback is used to improve future provision. Leaders therefore seek evidence not simply that worship took place, but that evaluation led to development – for example changes to planning, pupil leadership, prayer and reflection, accessibility, biblical depth or the range of responses offered.

The impact of spiritual development is understood through pupils' increasing ability to notice, question, reflect, connect ideas, articulate their thinking and respond thoughtfully. It is not assessed as a measure of personal faith.

## 14. Roles and responsibilities

- The Board of Directors holds leaders to account for ensuring that collective worship meets the school's legal obligations, Anglican foundation and Christian vision.
- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the planning, quality and development of collective worship and spirituality.
- The Deputy Headteacher supports staff induction and professional development.
- All staff contribute to the school's culture of spiritual flourishing and, where appropriate to their role, participate in and lead worship.
- Pupils, clergy and the wider school community contribute to the planning, leadership and evaluation of worship.

## 15. Legal requirements and withdrawal

As a Church of England school, collective worship is provided in accordance with the school's trust deed and reflects the traditions of the Church of England.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of the daily act of collective worship, without giving a reason. The school will respect any such request and will ensure appropriate supervision and duty of care for pupils who are withdrawn.

Parents considering withdrawal are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher so that they understand the nature of collective worship at MSJ and the practical arrangements for withdrawal. This conversation may also help to address any concerns and explain how worship is invitational, inclusive and accessible to all, but it is not a condition of withdrawal.

Pupils who are withdrawn will be appropriately supervised and provided with a quiet, purposeful activity during the period of collective worship.

## **16. Partnership with families, church and community**

The school communicates its worship themes and Christian vision through the website, newsletters and wider school life. Families are welcomed to key services and celebrations, including services at St John's Church. Parish clergy contribute regularly to worship, and church services are planned as an integral part of the school's worshipping life.

### **16.1 Respecting different faiths and beliefs**

As a Church of England school, our Christian foundation shapes the life and worship of the school. Rooted in God's love, we also seek to be a welcoming community in which pupils and families of all faiths and none are respected and valued.

We recognise and respect the religious identity and practices of pupils from other faith traditions. Where reasonably practicable, the school makes appropriate provision to enable pupils to observe their faith. This may include providing a suitable quiet space for prayer and making appropriate pastoral arrangements for pupils who are fasting, for example during Ramadan or observing other religious practices.

Through worship and the wider life of the school, pupils are encouraged to understand and respect different religious and non-religious perspectives, while developing a clear understanding of the distinctive Christian foundation of MSJ.

## **14. Policy review**

Having been carefully considered by the Board of Directors, this policy was ratified for publication on 24.09.2026.

It is a requirement that this policy is reviewed every three years the next review being due in February July 2029. However, this will be brought forward should changes in protocol be recommended by the Department for Education, the Diocese, SIAMs or the Local Authority.

Signed: **A. Swain**

Date: 24.09.2026

**Chair of Directors**

## **Appendices**

APPENDIX 1 - 1a Collective worship observation form and 1b A practical guide to evaluating collective worship

APPENDIX 2 - Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year

## APPENDIX 1a Collective worship observation form

Setting \_\_\_\_\_

Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Worship Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Allocation: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

*Collective worship in Church of England Settings should at its simplest create a time and space where we can come closer to God and God can come closer to us.*

| CRITERIA                                            | ASPECT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | COMMENT |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Central Attribute 1</b><br><br><b>Gathering</b>  | Is there a real sense of a very special time in the day?<br><br>Immediate impact, relevant, welcoming, stimulates interest or dull, uninteresting, lacks focus.                                                                                       |         |
| <b>Central attribute 2</b><br><br><b>Engaging</b>   | Does the worship leader capture the attention of the children and staff so they become actively engaged in the content?<br><br>Excellent - well expressed, stimulating or poor communicator<br><br>Convincing, enthusiastic, warm or lack of rapport. |         |
| <b>Central attribute 3</b><br><br><b>Responding</b> | Does the leader allow for a response from the children and adults – whether active or passive, noisy or quiet?                                                                                                                                        |         |
| <b>Central attribute 4</b><br><br><b>Sending</b>    | Does the leader send us out with a clear “thought for the day” something that changes our behaviour in some way?<br><br>Clear summary, learners given opportunity to reflect or unclear what the message was.                                         |         |
| <b>In addition</b>                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |         |
| <b>Content</b>                                      | Clear Christian / Biblical content and teaching.<br><br>Woolly, lack of structure, largely secular.                                                                                                                                                   |         |
| <b>Summary</b>                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |         |

## APPENDIX 1b Observation form pointers for consideration - NB not a check list.

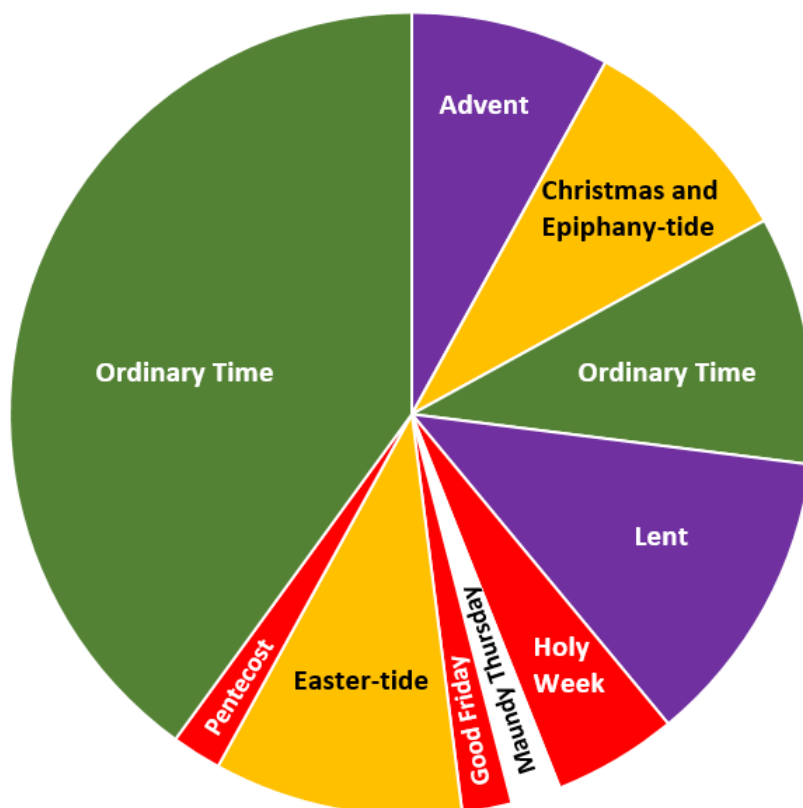
*Collective worship in Church of England Settings should at its simplest create a time and space where we can come closer to God and God can come closer to us.*

|               |                          |                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gathering     | Music (entry/exit)       | appropriate / random, linked to theme, creates atmosphere, delivers a message                                                       |
|               | Welcome                  | whether greetings exchanged and introduction made                                                                                   |
|               | Atmosphere               | extent to which act of worship is portrayed as special and important                                                                |
| Engaging      | Focus                    | table, cloth, Bible, cross, candle, artefacts ICT / Visual / drama provides appropriate, linked relevant visual/factual information |
|               | Awe and Wonder           | sense given of marvel of world / creation                                                                                           |
|               | Conviction               | extent to which message is clear and compelling or words lack power and appear as paying lip service                                |
| Responding    | Participation            | extent to which learners involved in responding, partner talk, opportunities for some to participate directly                       |
|               | Singing                  | whether there was appropriate hymn / song, quality, enthusiasm of participation                                                     |
|               | Reflection               | learners given time to pause and reflect                                                                                            |
|               | Prayers                  | extent to which prayers are appropriate and learner friendly, whether learners are invited to respond                               |
| Send          | Dismissal                | whether the person takes charge, smiles, engages with some learners, says 'thank you'                                               |
| Other aspects | Distinctively Anglican   | clear reference is made to the Bible and Anglican Christian teaching and belief e.g. the Trinity - God, Jesus and Holy Spirit       |
|               | Inclusive                | the worship reflects the multi faith / cultural nature of the world and feels inclusive to those of other and no faith              |
|               | Dynamism & Theatricality | was it a performance rather than an act of worship                                                                                  |
|               | Open or Closed           | does the leader give room for the children to build their own meanings / connections / links or are they told what to think?        |
|               | Age Appropriateness      | are the language, concepts, ideas appropriate? Is it meaningful for the youngest yet appropriate for the oldest?                    |

## APPENDIX 2

### Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year

Liturgical colours and seasons



| Season               | Liturgical Colour | Description                                                                                         |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Advent               | Purple            | The period covering the four Sundays before the 25th December: Period of preparation for Christmas. |
| Christmas-tide       | White or Gold     | 25 <sup>th</sup> December to 2 <sup>nd</sup> February                                               |
| Gap Between          | Green             | Gap of Green until Tuesday before Ash Wednesday                                                     |
| Lent                 | Purple            | The 40 days of preparation for Easter                                                               |
| Maundy Thursday      | White or Gold     | The Last Supper                                                                                     |
| Good Friday          | Red               | The Crucifixion                                                                                     |
| Easter-tide          | White or Gold     | Easter Day until Pentecost                                                                          |
| Pentecost            | Red               | 50 Days after Easter (lasts a week)                                                                 |
| The Rest of the Year | Green             | From Pentecost to Advent                                                                            |

|                        |               |                                                    |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Meaning of the colours | Purple        | Penitence, preparation                             |
|                        | White or Gold | Joy, purity, innocence, Saints who are not martyrs |
|                        | Red           | Fire & Blood, therefore Holy Spirit and Martyrdom  |
|                        | Green         | Everything else                                    |

|                |      |                                                                          |
|----------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In some places | Blue | The Blessed Virgin Mary                                                  |
|                | Pink | Mothering Sunday (4 <sup>th</sup> in Lent) and 3 <sup>rd</sup> in Advent |

There are different versions of the colours used.  
Please consult your parish for the colours used locally.