

# **Bentley Heath C E Primary School**



## **Collective Worship Policy**

Date written	<b>January 2026</b>
Date agreed and ratified by Local Academy Board	<b>February 2026</b>
Date of next full review	<b>February 2027</b>

Our policy for collective worship is set in the context of and gives life to our Christian vision and values. It mirrors the Church of England Education Office guidance for collective worship ***Inclusive, invitational, inspiring 2021***.

## The Law

By law collective worship:

- must be provided for every registered child every day
- must be in accordance with the tenets of its foundation and consistent with the denomination or religious tradition of the school in schools with a religious character

## School's Christian Vision:

At Bentley Heath we want all in our community to be shaped by Jesus' command to:

***"Love one another as I have loved you"*** (John 15:12).

This love guides all of the work that we do but is not the only inspiration that we take from the Bible:

### Who are we?

***"We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand."*** (Isaiah 64:8)

We believe that everyone is **made in the image and likeness of God** for a purpose. Everyone is welcome here. At Bentley Heath, we see ourselves as a **big family**. This means we look after one another, celebrate successes together and join in each other's joy and sadness. We seek to nurture all members of our community and value our uniqueness, **celebrating diversity and treasuring difference** including the individual talents and skills we have to offer. We also cherish our strong links with the **community** around us, and particularly with the churches of St Philip's Dorridge and St James' Bentley Heath.

### Why are we here?

***"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*** (Matthew 28:20)

As in the Great Commission, we want our children to have the opportunity to encounter God's presence in the big and the small things. Our aspiration for all members of the Bentley Heath family is that they would have the confidence to **go out into the world and make a difference** knowing that God is with them. We want our pupils and staff to **flourish** as part of our community, demonstrating love and compassion to themselves and others, **reaching their potential** in all areas of life. We are passionate for children to explore and develop their own **spirituality** and know that they are loved unconditionally by God in order to **be courageous advocates** and stand up for what they believe in.

### **How then do we live?**

***"Love one another as I have loved you"*** (John 15:12)

At Bentley Heath we strive to have a culture where we "love one another" and treat each other well. As a community we have a strong sense of justice and recognise our responsibility for others, providing compassion and encouragement so all can flourish both spiritually and academically. Our school values help us to live out our vision - valuing everyone, helping those less fortunate, forgiving one another, and appreciating beauty and nature. We have identified six core values that we believe are central to the work of our Christian educational community.

❖ **PERSEVERANCE** – keep on going, even when it's difficult.

***"Let us run with determination the race that lies before us. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end."*** (Hebrews 12: 1, 2)

❖ **PEACE** – at ease with yourself, others, and the world.

***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid"*** (John 14:27)

❖ **COMPASSION** – reaching out and making a difference for others.

***"Do for others what you want them to do for you."*** (Matthew 7:12)

❖ **FORGIVENESS** – giving and receiving opportunities to start again.

***“If you forgive people who sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you”***  
(Matthew 6:14)

❖ **CREATIVITY** – loving creation and expressing yourself as God made you.

***“Let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't. (Romans 12:6)***

❖ **HOPE** – God is faithful. Our future is in His hands.

***“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)***

## **Collective worship and the Church of England**

*‘Church of England schools are committed to offering high quality collective worship. They are places that recognise and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing the school's Christian vision. In practice this means that structure, planning, evaluation, participation, collaboration, and inspection of worship are all taken seriously by the school and by diocese. We strive to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish and to ‘live life in all its fullness’ John 10:10. Collective worship is seen as more than a daily ‘awe and wonder’ moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.*

*We aim for collective worship to be truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality. This is an approach that seeks to meet the needs of all, wherever they may be on their journey of faith and belief.’*

***Inclusive, invitational, inspiring The Church of England education 2021***

### **Inclusive, invitational and inspiring**

We work to ensure that everyone in the school family has an enriching experience in collective worship.

#### **Inclusive**

In our collective worship we meet, explore, question, and respond to others and, for some, to God. We seek to ensure that all pupils, their families and other adults encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. We recognise that pupils and staff in our schools come from different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. We acknowledge that everyone is at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. We give pupils the opportunity to think and ask questions. There is space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. We take care to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective worship will invite and welcome meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. We value pupils' own experiences that they bring to worship. In our school inclusion is expressed through some pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. We ensure that our collective school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

### **Invitational**

We aim for our worship to be consistently invitational. There is no compulsion for pupils to do or say anything that makes them uncomfortable. We provide opportunities for pupils 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 are only invited to pray if they wish to do so and are invited to pray in their own way. Invitation to prayer is always to be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies used in worship reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship. It connects with the theme wherever possible. They are used to enable pupils to explore the sacred, to educate and engage. We strive to choose music to reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community and the spiritual life of our school.

### **Inspiring**

Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in our school to be inspirational. Worship should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, we aim for pupils and adults to be inspired to become courageous advocates for justice. Collective worship will encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

### **Right to withdraw**

We acknowledge that there will always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools. The Church of England recognises the

right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils who wish to exercise this option. Parents wishing to exercise their right to withdraw should contact the headteacher to discuss this.

## **Aims and objectives**

Collective worship in our Church of England school will:

- Explore our Christian vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on our core Christian values (above) and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to spiritual and academic flourishing.
- 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.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship, and reflection.
- 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, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

## **Provision**

The rhythm of daily worship in our school allows pupils and adults to step away from the rigour of the classroom, creating a space for an encounter with faith in God. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on larger questions of meaning and purpose. Our school's collective worship practices provide a shared set of symbols, signs, words and actions and traditions which give our community a language upon which it can draw, in times of joy and grief. Collective worship is key to fostering a sense of fellowship and cohesion within our school community. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, this time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community. Throughout the year, we meet to celebrate and mark seasons in the Church calendar, such as Lent and Advent. Other important events in the school year, such as the start and end of the academic year, are marked with special services.

Pupils and adults will encounter the practice of regular prayer and worship as a normal part of the life of the school. These activities help provide a rhythm and stillness as a pattern of community life. Worship in our school will follow a recognisable structure that will help focus worship on important themes. We use a welcome or prayer followed

by a consideration of a Bible passage or story that we can then reflect on through discussion, prayer, silent reflection or music. It will be something that pupils and adults may want to share and discuss with others in school, in the community and at home. In this way worship overflows into our lives and choices.

The general pattern of our worship reflects that of an Anglican church service:

Gather	<b>Gathering in a space with others</b>	Stillness Peace Reflection Together/community Welcome Releasing Expecting Setting the atmosphere	<i>Instrumental music</i> <i>Images</i> <i>A question to think about</i> <i>Worship songs to join in</i> <i>Lighting candles</i> <i>Bringing things to the worship table including liturgical colours</i> <i>Liturgical or other greeting</i>
Engage	<b>Engaging, getting involved</b>	Hearing Seeing Learning Wondering Asking Questioning Experiences Sharing Thinking	<i>Bible stories</i> <i>Other stories</i> <i>Images</i> <i>Film/drama</i> <i>News</i> <i>Vision and values</i> <i>Talk partners</i> <i>Something to hold</i> <i>Church calendar</i> <i>Community joys and sorrows</i>
Respond	<b>Responding to an invitation</b>	Taking action Acting for oneself Acting for others Living differently Putting something right Making a change Making a commitment Worshipping Praying Thinking about what I can learn about God, myself, others, the world	<i>Known prayers</i> <i>Prepared prayers</i> <i>Responsive prayers</i> <i>Sung prayers</i> <i>In the moment prayers</i> <i>Sensory prayers</i> <i>Prayer walk</i> <i>Teaspoon prayers (TSP)</i> <i>Hand of prayer</i> <i>Prayer tree/box/space/garden</i> <i>Fill the blank prayers</i> <i>Meditation</i>
Send	<b>Sending out/living life differently</b>	Being inspired to: Live well or differently To pass the message on To encourage and be encouraged To love and be loved To value and be valued	<i>Known prayers</i> <i>Sending liturgy</i> <i>Take aways</i> <i>Clergy blessing</i> <i>Sing as you leave</i> <i>Leave in silence</i> <i>Leave when ready</i>

		To make a difference <i>To make the world a little more like God intended</i>	<i>Leave to music</i>
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### Our pattern for worship:

	Leader	Whole school/phase /class	Focus
Monday	Revd. Duncan Hill-Brown	Whole School	Series devised with Duncan
Tuesday	Katie Memory / Class teachers	Key Stage	Sung Worship
Wednesday	Member of the leadership team	Whole School	Values centred
Thursday	Class Teacher	Classes	Response to values
Friday	Member of the leadership team	Whole School	Celebration

### Collective worship and spirituality

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. To make conversations about spirituality more accessible to every member of our school community, Bentley Heath CE Primary School has chosen to follow ideas developed by the Education Department at the Diocese of Gloucester.

This language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8). Yet, in life things happen that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible. Christians would view this as an opportunity to relate to the Divine Creator God.

- Cracks may be caused when something so good and breath-taking happens that the pot expands and cracks – the **wows** of life.
- Cracks may happen when something challenging happens and threatens the comfort of everyday – the **ows** of life.
- Cracks can also happen in the stillness and ordinariness of everyday – the **nows** of life, when a moment of stillness, a pause or prayer creates a crack in the normal, physical everyday.

In these special moments there is a spiritual opportunity. Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with golden joinery or glue, creates something that has been

broken into something even more beautiful. Using this metaphor, the **wows**, **ows** and **nows** of life offer the possibility of cracks that are filled with gold and make the pot even more beautiful. The gold in the cracks reflect a little of the wonder of spirituality.

Bentley Heath CE Primary School uses this language and the concepts of **wows**, **ows** and **nows**. These are used to explore relationships with:

- ourselves
- others
- the wider natural world and beyond
- and offering the invitation to relate to God

Collective worship is an important opportunity for children and adults to flourish spiritually. It provides a liminal space away from the demands of teaching and learning where being still, wondering and reflecting, praying and worshipping are gifted to everyone.

We recognise that regardless of whether participants have religious faith, collective worship can contribute to the nurture of innate spiritual capacity. We plan a varied programme of collective worship to engage individuals on the varied spiritual pathways.

These are some of the elements we include:

- Music
- Candles
- Silence
- Singing different types of worship songs
- Prayer – creative, responsive, known, silent, community
- Liturgy
- Images – moving and still
- Stories
- News
- Wondering/big questions
- Awe-full and awful of school/community/national/global life
- Space/time
- No words
- Indoors
- Outdoors

## **Developing staff expertise and knowledge**

Within the context of our resources, we work to build up the expertise of staff, pupils, clergy, and other adults in facilitating collective worship in our school. We strive to ensure that:

- Worship leaders, including clergy, have access to regular training, primarily through the diocesan education team.
- Pupil worship leaders are supported, encouraged, and resourced to contribute to meaningful acts of worship.
- Worship leaders, including clergy, have access to high quality and current resources.
- Those from outside agencies and church groups invited into the school to facilitate are properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and the school's vision.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

- The governing body ensures monitoring of the impact of worship; this monitoring includes and meaningfully involves pupil voice.
- There is a named member of staff responsible for collective worship who ensures that appropriate policy and practice are in place and publicly available. This is the headteacher.

References:

Church of England vision for education:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/vision-education>

Church of England Education Office guidance on collective worship:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf>