Westbury C of E Junior School

Collective Worship Policy

"Let your light shine." – Matthew 5:16

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the vision, values and Christian character of the school. At the heart of Westbury C of E Junior School is the belief that every child should be supported to flourish, grow in confidence and fulfil their potential. Our approach is underpinned by our values:

Respect Care Inspire

Policy Information

Policy information	Details
Status	Draft for governing body approval
Prepared	1st November 2026
Policy lead	Aleks Young, Assistant Headteacher and Collective Worship Lead
Headteacher	Lindsay Clough
Approval date	To be completed by the governing body
Review cycle	Annually and sooner if legislation, guidance or school practice changes
Next review	November 2028, subject to approval date

1 Purpose and Christian vision

Collective worship is central to the life of Westbury Church of England Junior School. This policy sets out how we provide daily worship that expresses our Christian foundation, supports spiritual development and welcomes pupils and adults of every faith and belief. It applies to worship in school, outdoors and at church, including provision for pupils in Wiltshire Class.

Our vision is rooted in Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:16, expressed in our school as "Let your light shine". We believe every child has worth, gifts and potential. Worship offers opportunities to encounter Christian faith, reflect on God's love and consider how our choices can make a positive difference to others.

Our values shape both the content of worship and how it is experienced. Respect encourages us to value ourselves, others and creation. Care calls us to compassion, kindness, service and stewardship. Inspire encourages us to recognise our gifts, encourage others and act with hope.

2 Aims

- Provide opportunities to worship God and encounter the teachings of Jesus, the Bible and Christian understandings of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Offer prayer, stillness, reflection, music and story through which pupils and adults can explore meaning, purpose, belonging and hope.
- Develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, thoughtful questioning and respectful relationships.
- Enable pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship and turn reflection into service and courageous advocacy.

3 Legal framework and distinct purpose

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, section 70 and Schedule 20, requires an act of collective worship on each school day for every pupil in attendance, subject to the withdrawal rights in section 71. Worship may be organised for the whole school or in smaller groups. It is provided separately from taught curriculum time.

As a voluntary controlled Church of England school, our worship must accord with the relevant provisions of the school's trust deed or, where these do not make provision, the tenets and practices of the school's designated denomination. We therefore provide worship reflecting our Anglican foundation. The general SACRE determination route for changing the broadly Christian character of worship in schools without a religious character is not the basis for this policy. Governors oversee the school's trust deed obligations, seeking diocesan advice where needed.

Collective worship and Religious Education have different purposes. RE is an academic subject in which pupils learn about religious and non-religious worldviews. Collective worship offers a shared encounter with Christian faith and opportunities for personal reflection and response. Worship does not replace RE teaching.

An assembly may communicate notices, celebrate achievements or discuss current affairs. These activities alone do not constitute collective worship. Where they share a session, the act of worship has a clearly identified beginning, reflective focus and conclusion.

4 Inclusive invitational and inspirational worship

Inclusive worship recognises that pupils and adults hold different religious and non-religious beliefs and may be exploring questions of faith. Leaders use language that welcomes everyone without assuming shared belief. Christian teaching is presented clearly and respectfully, while other traditions and worldviews are represented accurately and without stereotypes.

Invitational worship enables each person to engage with integrity. Pupils may listen, reflect, question or participate without being required to express faith. No one is compelled to pray, sing religious words, say “Amen”, adopt a prayer posture or make a declaration of belief. Leaders may say, “You may join in this prayer if you wish, or use this time for quiet reflection.”

Inspirational worship connects the school’s vision and Christian teaching with everyday life. It encourages gratitude, reconciliation, compassion, justice and practical action, including pupil-led responses to issues affecting the school, local community and wider world.

5 A shared understanding of spirituality

Spirituality may include a relationship with God, but is not limited to religious belief. We understand spiritual development as growing awareness of ourselves, our relationships, the world and questions beyond immediate experience. Pupils may express this through curiosity, creativity, wonder, empathy, silence, questions and service. We respect personal responses and do not assess a pupil’s faith or require disclosure of private beliefs.

6 Planning and organisation

The Collective Worship Lead coordinates termly plans with the Headteacher, staff, pupil worship leaders and church partners. Plans connect our school values, the White Horse Team Worship Programme, the Christian calendar and current issues. They identify the theme, biblical focus, leader, resources, opportunities for response and reasonable adjustments. Plans remain flexible enough to respond sensitively to significant events, celebration, loss or community concerns.

Worship takes place daily, normally within the morning assembly slot. Class or smaller-group worship is arranged where appropriate, including when the school timetable changes. The published timetable identifies the time, location and leader. Worship is planned to be purposeful and age appropriate, with duration adapted to pupils’ needs.

Day	Focus	Act of worship
Monday	Picture News launch	Introduce the news, Big Question and relevant values or rights. Include a distinct worship element connecting the issue to Christian teaching, reflection and an invitation to prayer.
Tuesday	OPAL and spiritual development	Gather for a planned act of worship linked to wonder, relationships, stewardship or gifts, with a Christian focus and personal response. Outdoor play enriches this focus but does not itself replace daily worship.
Wednesday	Picture News collective worship	Revisit the issue through Scripture, the White Horse Team Bible theme and the term’s value. Offer stillness, prayer or reflection and a possible practical response.

Thursday	Singing worship	Use music linked to the Church year, Bible theme and school value. Include reflection on meaning and an invitation to prayer; rehearsal alone does not replace worship.
Friday	Celebration worship	Celebrate achievements, Values Awards and service. Include a distinct act of worship with gratitude, reflection, prayer and blessing. Recognise effort and progress sensitively, focusing on how we have let our light shine this week .

7 A recognisable worship structure

Leaders normally use four stages: gather, engage, respond and send. Gathering marks a transition into worship, using an appropriate greeting, music or visual focus. Engagement introduces a biblical story, Christian teaching or question. Response offers space for reflection, discussion, silence, music or optional prayer. Sending invites pupils to carry an idea or action into daily life.

Music, art, poetry, drama, artefacts and liturgical colours can deepen understanding. Traditional and contemporary Christian music and prayers or responses are introduced with explanation and invitation.

8 Annual themes and curriculum connections

Term	Value	Focus
Autumn 1	Respect	Respecting ourselves, others and God's creation
Autumn 2	Care	Compassion, kindness and service
Spring 1	Inspire	Using our gifts to encourage others
Spring 2	Respect	Justice, forgiveness and respectful communities
Summer 1	Care	Stewardship, community and courageous compassion
Summer 2	Inspire	Flourishing, leadership, hope and life beyond school

The White Horse Team programme supplies a developing biblical framework. The school's structure connects Respect with belonging and hope, including Joseph, parables and Easter; Care with wisdom and unity, including Solomon, Acts and Pentecost; and Inspire with love and compassion, including Luke's Gospel, Acts and 1 Corinthians. Termly planning places biblical material and festivals in their appropriate seasonal context rather than treating these links as a fixed calendar.

Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost shape the annual rhythm. Harvest, remembrance and leavers' worship offer further opportunities to gather. Learning about other religious festivals is handled respectfully, with a clear distinction between understanding another tradition and requiring participation in its worship.

Picture News provides a starting point for discussion of contemporary issues, British values, protected characteristics and relevant UNCRC articles. Leaders check resources for age appropriateness, accuracy

and sensitivity and make meaningful links to Scripture. Discussion encourages informed reflection without pressuring pupils to adopt a particular political position.

9 OPAL and spiritual development

Outdoor Play and Learning helps pupils notice beauty, explore ideas, form relationships, develop resilience and care for the environment. These experiences can prompt reflection on creation, responsibility, gratitude and the gifts each person brings. Pupils may understand and express these experiences through religious or non-religious perspectives.

The Tuesday focus provides a planned opportunity to connect outdoor experiences with worship. A short gathering, biblical idea, reflection and invitation to prayer may take place outdoors or in class. Staff explicitly plan this act of worship; ordinary play, a behaviour briefing or a moment of awe alone is not treated as fulfilment of the daily requirement.

10 Church and family partnerships

We work with All Saints Church, Westbury, and White Horse Team partners, including Revd Rebecca, to enrich worship and support pupils' understanding of faith and practice. Families are informed of church services. We provide opportunities to share worship themes and reflections at home without expecting families to practise a religion.

Services away from school are planned with appropriate staffing, risk assessment, access arrangements and clear information for families. Withdrawal rights apply equally to worship in church. Curriculum visits and educational experiences are distinguished from acts of worship so parents can understand what participation involves.

11 Access and participation for every pupil

Worship is planned for different ages, communication profiles, abilities and experiences. This includes pupils in Wiltshire Class and pupils with sensory, physical, emotional or learning needs. Staff use known support plans and advice from families and professionals to anticipate barriers.

- Use clear language, visual prompts, objects, repetition, signing and accessible ways to respond.
- Provide preparation, trusted adult support, flexible seating, ear defenders, appropriate sensory resources and a calm space where needed.
- Offer shorter or smaller-group worship where appropriate, preserving a meaningful daily opportunity rather than excluding pupils because of SEND or dysregulation.
- Prepare pupils for church settings and changes of routine, using route information or photographs where helpful.

Pupils are never singled out for their beliefs, non-participation or support needs. Leaders handle sensitive subjects, including bereavement and suffering, with care and consult pastoral or safeguarding staff where necessary. Worship is not used to seek personal disclosures or publicly address individual behaviour.

12 Pupil leadership

Prayer Council and Worship Leaders are supported to contribute before, during and after worship. Opportunities include suggesting themes, choosing music, preparing the worship space, welcoming visitors, reading, storytelling, signing, sharing optional prayers and gathering feedback. Roles are accessible and voluntary, with adult guidance and supervision.

Pupils help evaluate whether worship is understandable, welcoming and meaningful and suggest practical responses. Adults ensure pupil leadership is a substantive contribution rather than simply a performance or an additional responsibility placed on the same children.

13 Visitors and safeguarding

Visitors are agreed by the Headteacher or Collective Worship Lead and follow the school's safeguarding and visitor procedures. Invitations from a published directory are not treated as evidence of safeguarding checks or quality assurance. A member of staff remains present, supports participation and manages behaviour or pastoral concerns.

Before a visit, the organiser briefs the visitor on the school's Christian vision, collective rather than congregational worship, the theme and biblical focus, pupils' ages and needs, timing, equipment, safeguarding arrangements and evaluation. Content and resources are discussed in advance and checked for suitability.

Visitors may explain their own beliefs authentically but must not assume shared faith, disparage other beliefs, seek conversions or pressure pupils into religious commitments. Prayer must be introduced as an invitation with space for quiet reflection. Visitors must not request pupils' personal contact details, offer private follow-up or take photographs outside agreed school procedures.

Staff introduce and thank the visitor, explain how pupils may respond and provide feedback afterwards. Concerns about content or conduct are addressed promptly and any safeguarding concerns are reported through the school's safeguarding procedures.

14 Right of withdrawal

Parents and carers with parental responsibility have the legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of collective worship. They do not need to give a reason. Choosing a Church of England school does not remove this right. A request is respected without pressure to reconsider, and the pupil is treated with dignity.

To arrange withdrawal, contact the Headteacher through the school office on 01373 822695 or admin@westbury-jun.wilts.sch.uk and state whether the request concerns all worship or particular elements or occasions. A written record helps us implement arrangements, but a written application or attendance at a meeting is not a condition of exercising the right.

The school offers an optional discussion about content, timings and supervision. Parents may view the planned programme or ask questions, but do not have to explain their beliefs. Withdrawal is put into effect promptly and applies to relevant worship at school and off site, including church services.

The Headteacher agrees safe, suitable supervision during the withdrawn period, on school premises. The school is not required to provide additional teaching or incur additional costs. Withdrawal is not used by the school to replace worship with interventions or catch-up lessons. Where parents and school agree, a pupil may remain present without participating; physical presence is never imposed as the only arrangement for a child withdrawn from attendance.

Parents may propose alternative religious worship. The Headteacher considers the applicable legal arrangements, safeguarding, supervision and any costs before agreeing practical provision. Requests and agreed arrangements are recorded securely and shared only with staff who need to implement them. Arrangements are checked annually and when circumstances change; withdrawal continues until the parent withdraws the request and does not require annual renewal.

The separate parental right to withdraw a child from all or part of RE is explained in the RE policy and on the RE webpage. A request relating to one does not automatically apply to the other. At this junior school, withdrawal from worship is exercised by parents.

15 Staff participation and professional support

Staff are welcomed to worship as members of the school community. The Headteacher respects the statutory protections applying to teachers in voluntary controlled schools who do not wish to attend religious worship and agrees appropriate supervision arrangements without requiring personal religious participation. Any staffing question is addressed with appropriate HR or diocesan advice.

Staff, clergy and pupil worship leaders receive guidance on accessible planning, Christian content, invitational language and evaluation. The Collective Worship Lead identifies training needs and draws on diocesan support and suitable resources. Staff are not expected to profess personal religious belief.

16 Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring statutory provision, consistency with the school's trust deed and Christian character, and respect for withdrawal rights. It approves this policy and monitors implementation with the Headteacher. Foundation governors contribute their understanding of the school's church foundation.

The Headteacher, Lindsay Clough, oversees daily implementation, staffing, safeguarding, withdrawal arrangements and communication with families. The Collective Worship Lead, Aleks Young, coordinates planning, resources, support for leaders, records and evaluation. This responsibility is distinct from RE subject leadership even where the same person holds both roles.

Staff who lead worship prepare suitable content, provide agreed adjustments and maintain clear boundaries between notices, curriculum learning and worship. Church partners support planning and leadership within the school's framework. Pupils contribute ideas, leadership and feedback with adult support.

17 Monitoring evaluation and improvement

The Collective Worship Lead maintains a record of themes, biblical material, leaders and opportunities for response. Brief evaluations are gathered across the term from pupils and adults, including pupils with SEND and members of different faith and non-religious backgrounds. Feedback may use conversation, drawings, symbols or short forms.

Each term, the lead considers Christian content, accessibility, invitational language, daily provision and pupil involvement. Governors undertake a monitoring visit at least annually. These arrangements are policy expectations to implement following approval.

Evaluation considers whether pupils can connect worship with the school's vision, reflect on questions, describe meaningful experiences and identify responses in everyday life. It examines opportunities and impact without grading faith, measuring religious commitment or assuming that participation reveals belief. Findings inform subsequent planning, staff development and school self-evaluation, including preparation for SIAMS.