



Dream Believe Achieve

Religious Education (RE) Collective Worship Policy

Downton Church of England School

Last Updated July 2023

In our school our Christian vision and belief shapes all we do.

'Dream Believe Achieve'

'From the smallest of seeds a mighty tree will grow' Mark 4: 30-32

We cannot possibly teach our pupils everything they need to know to succeed in a rapidly changing world. But we can ignite a passion for learning, encourage their **dreams of a better world where people care for one another and live together in peace** - the kind of world Jesus spoke about when he talked about the Kingdom of Heaven.

As a Christian School, we can create an environment where children meet a God who cares for us and wants the best for each of us, and show that to **believe in God gives us worth and purpose in life**, and where each child can **achieve** beyond expectations!

Inspired by the parable of the mustard seed we want our pupils to go out into the world from Downton and, stand out in their communities.

'Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.' William Butler Yeats

Downton aims to provide a challenging, yet nurturing, environment based on our Christian Values and Beliefs. It is our responsibility as a Church of England school to provide the children with the building blocks of the Christian faith through the means of worship, prayer and familiarity with Scripture. Our children are challenged to think for themselves about the big questions that face the world today, within an environment which is accepting of other faiths and cultures.

All the children in our care are children of God and are created in his likeness. God is love and he wants the best for his children. He wants us to have life in all its fullness, and central to the Christian faith is the truth that he sent his Son to die for us so that we might be forgiven and by his grace receive eternal life, and to build a relationship with him of love and trust. He never said that things would be easy, but that he is with us by his Spirit in whatever situations we find ourselves. As we grow in that relationship and allow his Spirit to work in our lives, we see the outworking of that in

all we do, think and say. Our values demonstrate qualities which we would find in that relationship.

Collective worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

Policy Statement

At Downton, worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well-planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Downton collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

Through collective worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and world faiths*¹) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.²

Legal Requirements

The law requires the Headteacher and governing body of every school to provide a daily act of Collective Worship in all voluntary aided schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. Worship at Downton CE Primary School is distinctly Christian and reflects Anglican traditions.

The governing body of this school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools

¹ Collective worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of different faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

² "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God". William Temple (1881-1894)

(SIAMS) Evaluation Schedule. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

The right of withdrawal

At Downton there are children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious worldview. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that we reflect the community that we serve and are inclusive to all in the community. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this is made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements are made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from collective worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. During this meeting, it may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and headteacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

(Teaching Staff in a VA School do not have the right of withdrawal and attendance at collective worship is an expectation when they are appointed).

Guiding Principles

Collective worship in Downton aims to:

- Have a pivotal place in the life of the school, where all the teaching staff and children can come together for worship and to share in building community.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth
- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision is unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of different faiths and none to be present with integrity.

- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well known Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading worship.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included on the school website.

How collective worship is organised

Leadership

- Daily worship is led by the headteacher, and members of staff. Each week on a Tuesday and Thursday members of the clergy from the Anglican/Baptist churches and Open the book lead worship. Whole Class assemblies occur termly. Worship Council lead lead worship or a celebration on a rota with visiting clergy.
- The RE lead sends out the themes which are closely linked to our school Christian values and follows the Church Calendar. The visitors leading worship at Downton are very experienced and work collaboratively with the school to develop themes and ideas. This information leaflet <https://www.leicester-dbe.com/collective-worship/> is in school for any visitor who may need extra information around leading collective worship.

Planning

- Specific time is set aside for planning a collective worship programme and a range of resources and websites are used to support this. We recognise the importance of marking out the act of Collective Worship from other assembly activities. We mark out this special time by lighting a candle, saying a welcome and asking children to reflect quietly.
- The RE lead is the Collective Worship Co-ordinator who meets regularly with the children in Worship Council and coordinates with staff and visitors who lead worship. These meetings are an opportunity to review and evaluate the last terms Acts of Collective Worship and to plan themes for the next term
- The programme of Collective Worship is led by the School's Christian Values and the Church Calendar of festivals. This pattern is flexible and on occasions it is recognised that teachers may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.
- The Christian values of the school are central to our collective worship. Each school value is the overarching theme for a term, they are identified, explored and celebrated through acts of worship either as whole school or in classes. These values are expressed and put into practice through the actions of the children as a result of the focus.
- Explicit links are made between Bible stories and the Christian values of the school through stories from the Bible, artwork and links to people who were devout in their Christian beliefs.
- Spiritual growth through prayer, stillness and reflection is nurtured at Downton not only during worship but at different points in the day and the year. Children reflect before eating and Prayer and Reflection Days are planned at significant times of the school and Church year to develop reflection and prayer further through activities and experiences.

Organisation

An act of Collective Worship takes place every day and is an important part of school life, making space for pupils and staff to come together and share in worship through learning, music, reflection and prayer. Our worship is inclusive and gives all of the school community the chance to be part of the experience, while respecting the integrity of family and cultural backgrounds.

The weekly pattern of collective worship looks like this:

Monday – Head Teacher's worship, introducing the focus of the week

Tuesday – Anglican clergy or Open the Book worship linked to the week's theme – once a month this worship is led by a class

Wednesday - Hymn practice

Thursday - Led by a member of the church or worship council

Friday - Celebration Assembly

Our members of the Clergy visit our school regularly, each Tuesday and Thursday we have our worship led by one of these visitors.

Teachers and the Headteacher lead Collective Worship during the week and there is a Celebration Assembly once a week to celebrate pupil's achievements. On a monthly basis a whole class plans and delivers collective worship to which parents are invited. We also celebrate Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas and Easter, in the local church of St Laurence.

Worship takes place in the school hall where there is a table/altar with a candle on. Our School Christian Values are also displayed here and the school Prayer Box. The children are seated in different ways depending on the number in the hall, so in rows facing forwards, a semi-circle or circle around the leader. Class worship always has a candle flame displayed to ensure the atmosphere for worship is created and seen as different from other classroom activities. However, there are occasions when worship may be taken outside, in the school ground or in the local community or in other places around the school.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. This is through training by the SDBE's CPD sessions and through the PSA.

Monitoring and evaluation

Whole school and class Collective Worship is regularly monitored by staff, the governing body and pupils. We observe the worship space, the children's general attitude to worship, their level of interest and involvement. We take note of classroom feedback and follow up from the children. We look for the effect on the quality of relationships within the school and monitor the effect on our school ethos. The views of pupils about collective worship are sought through the Worship Council committee and pupil questionnaires. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in the leading and monitoring of Collective worship. We have designated Collective Worship monitors made up of pupils from all classes in key stage 2. Representation of our governing body have a role monitoring Collective Worship through membership of the Worship Council and attending Worship at the school. The practical strategies used to monitor and evaluate the impact of worship.

Disseminating the policy

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.

Date of last review: January 2020

Headteacher signed: Paula Carlton

Date: 14.2.20

Chair of Governors signed: Peter Ulliyatt

Date: 14.2.20

Dated 4th November 1968

Downton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Wilts County Council

to

Vicar and churchwardens of Downton

CONVEYANCE

Jonas and Parker – 45 Castle Street, Salisbury

This Conveyance is made the fourth day of November One thousand nine hundred and sixty eight B E T W E E N THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF WILTS (hereinafter called “the council”) of the one part and THE REVEREND DONOVAN VICTOR EVENING Clerk in Holy Orders Vicar of the Vicarage and Parish Church of Downton in the County of Wilts and Diocese of Salisbury STEVEN HORNER of Mill House High Street Downton aforesaid and GORDON LYDFORD of “Elmsleigh Lode Hill Downton aforesaid Churchwardens of the said Parish (hereinafter together called “the Trustees”) of the other part.

W H E R E A S:-

1. By a Deed Poll of Conveyance dated the Third December One thousand eight hundred and forty-six and made by the then Warden of St Mary College of Winchester and the Scholars Clerks of the same College under the authority of the School Sites Acts 1841 and 1846 certain land in the Parish of Downton aforesaid therein more particularly described on which was built the Downton Church of England School now known as the Downton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School (hereinafter called “the Foundation”) was conveyed unto the Minister and Churchwardens for the time being of the Parish of Downton aforesaid and their successors for the purposes of the said Acts and upon trust to permit the said premises and all buildings thereon erected or to be erected to be for ever thereafter appropriated and used as and for a School or Schools for the education of poor persons in the Parish of Downton aforesaid and for a residence or residences of a Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress or schoolmaster and schoolmistress to the same School or Schools and for no other purpose which said School should always be in union with and conducted upon the principles and in furtherance of the ends and designs of the Incorporated National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church and should be under the management and control of the Minister for the time being of the said parish of Downton or in his absence his Curate

2. By an Order under the Seal of the Secretary of State for Education and Science dated the Twentieth October One thousand nine hundred and sixty-four and made in pursuance of sub-section (1) of Section 16 of the Education Act 1944 the Secretary of State did thereby authorise the transfer of the Foundation to a new site comprising the land and premises hereinafter more particularly described and intended to be hereby conveyed.

3. The Trustees have pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 6 of the First Schedule to the Education Act 1946 requested the Council to convey to them the said land and premises hereby conveyed being the new site of the Foundation which the Council have agreed to do in manner hereinafter appearing

NOW THIS DEED WITNESSES as follows:-

1. IN pursuance of the said agreement and in consideration of the premises the Council in pursuance of their functions as Local Education Authority and in exercise of the powers conferred upon them by the Education Acts 1944 and 1968 and all other powers enabling them in that behalf and as Trustees hereby convey unto the Trustees ALL THAT piece of land (hereinafter called "the property") situate in the Parish of Downton aforesaid containing 1.23 acres or thereabouts as the same is more particularly delineated on the plan annexed hereto and is therefore edged with a red verge line TOGETHER with the buildings and premises erected thereon and used for the purposes of the Foundation TO HOLD the same unto the Trustees and their successors Vicar and Churchwardens for the time being of the parish of Downton aforesaid in fee simple

2. THE Trustees and their successors as aforesaid shall hold the property and all or any buildings erected thereon on trust for the purposes of the Foundation.

IN WITNESS whereof the Council has caused its Common Seal to be hereunto affixed and the Trustees have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written

THE COMMON SEAL of THE COUNCIL
Of the ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY of WILTS was
Hereunto affixed in the presence of:
Deputy Clerk of the Council

SIGNED SEALED and DELIVERED by the
said THE REVEREND DONOVAN VICTOR EVENING
in the presence of: W G Petty

SIGNED SEALED and DELIVERED by the
said STEVEN HORNER in the presence of:
Witness: I E Senior

SIGNED SEALED and DELIVERED by the
said GORDON LYDFORD in the presence of:
Witness: F Chalk