



Beechwood Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Introduction

At Beechwood Primary School we aim to provide quality collective worship which makes a vital contribution to developing and reinforcing a school's ethos and values and to the provision made for opportunities to support the spiritual (moral, social and cultural) development of all its pupils.

Aims

To provide pupils with a range of opportunities to worship God (however defined or understood).

To give pupils opportunities to reflect on the significance of Christian (and other faith traditions') stories, events and festivals and how these might affect their lives.

To offer experiences and opportunities for pupils to join in with and respond to a variety of forms of collective worship in order for them to reflect on the significance of their own and others' beliefs.

To promote our shared values and contribute to our common life together by celebrating individual achievement, school achievement and wider community achievement within the context of collective worship.

A distinction will be made between the 'assembly' time and the 'act of collective worship' time.

Legal Requirements

The Education Reform Act (ERA 6.1) 1988 requires all pupils registered in maintained schools to attend a daily act of worship. It also requires that the majority of acts of collective worship must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' but this does not preclude consideration of other faiths and/or secular view points. In this way collective worship can provide opportunities to develop a reflective understanding of 'self', 'others' and 'God', thus contributing towards enhancing community cohesion.

DFE Circular 1/94 57 states that collective worship should *in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary activities; it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. However, worship in school will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'.*

The SACRE's 1997 definition of spiritual development is; *the concern to develop the most distinctive and desirable capacities that, above all, distinguish human beings from other living creatures. It is a concern which goes beyond what a pupil can know and can do and relates to what sort of person they are and are becoming.*

Who is Responsible

The headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.

Worship for whom

We accept that collective worship should include all children but that parents have a right to withdraw their child from the 'collective worship' part of the assembly. However, when this happens the teacher will discuss the concerns with the family and endeavour to help them understand the value and content of collective worship.

Staff have a right to withdraw 'on grounds of conscience' from acts of collective worship and cannot be required to lead acts of collective worship, although many are happy to do so.

Pupils should not be withdrawn from collective worship in order to take part in another school activity.

Principles underpinning our Collective Worship

We provide a range of flexible groups to suit the wide range of ages present in the school. At the same time we seek to meet the need for everyone in school to come together on a regular basis.

Groupings for Collective Worship

Monday	Whole School Collective Worship
Tuesday	Reflection Time in Class
Wednesday	Whole School Collective Worship/Singing
Thursday	Reflection Time in Class
Friday	Celebration Assembly

Whole school assemblies are allocated 20 minutes each.

The headteacher has put together a carefully planned programme of thematic work for each half term.

This provides a framework in which the headteacher, deputy and other teachers can prepare their own assemblies. However, the theme is not restrictive and teachers may wish to pursue some other aspect, perhaps relevant to curriculum studies. It is important that the framework is sufficiently flexible to take account of unplanned but important events.

We try to provide a variety of interesting and stimulating experiences. This may be done through music, tape recordings, objects to look at, taste or smell, visitors to talk to the pupils.

Visitors are very welcome at Collective Worship and on a regular basis Rev Eddie Marquez and Linda Galpin (St James) visit us.

Who takes Collective Worship?

The headteacher and deputy take the majority of whole school gatherings; a rota is arranged for Wednesdays.

Content

There is not a rigid prescription on the content of Collective Worship. Often the format will include some of the following:

- ❖ A song of hymn
- ❖ A time for quiet reflection
- ❖ A moment's silence
- ❖ A prayer
- ❖ A story, religious otherwise
- ❖ A short piece of drama
- ❖ A focal point – flowers, picture etc
- ❖ A candle lighting

There are a number of books in school providing ideas and information suitable for assembly. These are mainly kept in the hall but all staff are welcome to use these at any time. The school now has several volumes of the Assembly File.

Health, Safety and Well-being

In collective worship we follow the school's health, safety and well-being policy. For example, appropriate care must be taken when using lighted candles and electrical equipment. In line with our 'net-safety' policy any internet resource used must be checked by the leader prior to their use in an act of collective worship. In the event of fire all pupils must be familiar with exit routes from the hall and other areas of the school where collective worship takes place. Visitors are not left unaccompanied with children/young people.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Collective worship will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, ethnicity, religion and gender. During collective worship, religions will be presented fairly and accurately, and diversity and equality will be affirmed.

Further Development

This policy will be open to review at any time should concerns arise, new ideas be suggested etc. It is incorporated into a policy framework for regular review of all school policies.

Opportunities for staff development in this area will be explored where they arise.

Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed: November 2014

Next review: November 2016

Signed by Head Teacher

Signed by Chair of Curriculum & Welfare

Appendix A

Planning

Key points in planning in act or collective worship.

Your aim

- ❖ What is the main point you wish to make and what do you want your pupils to take away from it?

Your structure

- ❖ How will you open, develop and close the act of collective worship?
- ❖ How will you balance familiarity with keeping pupils interested and engaged?

Your strategies and resources

- ❖ What will you use and how will you use it?
- ❖ How will/does the age group and age-spread of those involved and the size of the gathering affect the strategies and resources you will use?
- ❖ How will you involve pupils in:
 - Thinking, reflecting, praying
 - Singing and/or listening to music and or music/making
 - Reading and responding
 - Drama or dance
 - Listening and speaking

Remember

- ❖ It is important to mark the collective worship time from assembly time (use a bell or a candle or a religious artefact as appropriate to the theme to indicate this special time together).
- ❖ Build up a common structure for collective worship across the school but keep it flexible – balancing familiarity with something new.
- ❖ Have a clear aim/focus and don't try to do too much in any one act of collective worship – allow space for quiet and for thinking time.
- ❖ Relate it to the pupils' own experiences and build from there. For example, if focusing on the story of Jesus' arrest and trial-talk about times that they might have felt betrayed by a friend, or indeed when they might have betrayed a friend. How did it feel? What happened?
- ❖ Use contemporary events judiciously to make a point and relate to pupils' own experiences and contribute to their knowledge and understanding of the world in which they are growing up.
- ❖ Worship cannot be compelled as it is a voluntary response to the divine (God however defined or understood). Provide opportunities for private reflection or guide their reflection with questions. Invite them to pray or to listen to the words of a prayer and if they agree to make it their own by saying 'Amen'.

Appendix B

Visitors

Visitors are free to present their ideas and experiences. They can make it clear that these are of value to them and to their religious community and ask pupils to think about what they have said/presented from their own point of view. They are not free to evangelise or to criticise the experiences or insights of others or impose their views on pupils in any way. In leading prayer, no assumptions about the commitment of those present should be made.

The school should ensure that visitors who are to lead collective worship:

- ❖ Are made aware of the school's policy and guidelines, know the theme they are to focus on the amount of time available.
- ❖ Are aware of the ages, backgrounds and aptitudes of those present.
- ❖ Are encouraged to plan the act of collective worship, and in the case of regular visitors, to vary the approach/strategies that they use.
- ❖ Know what resources and equipment are available to them.

The school should ensure that visitors:

- ❖ Are welcomed and made to feel comfortable
- ❖ Are not left alone with pupils during collective worship whilst staff engage in other activities.

The National Association of Teachers of RE has a free download on their website some advice to schools on visits and visitors. This includes a 'code of conduct' for religious believers visiting schools which SACRE recommends school follow – www.natre.org.uk/docstore/rbvs/pdf