



Webber's Church of England School

Collective Worship Policy

Introduction

This policy has been written within the context of the school's Vision and Mission Statement and supports the aims of Webber's Church of England School. The ethos of Webber's is reflected in and expressed through Collective Worship.

Collective Worship, within a Christian context, plays an important part in the life of Webber's. It is a time in the day when children and members of staff meet in a calm and peaceful atmosphere and where all present are given the opportunity to reflect and participate.

Definition of 'Collective Worship'

- School Assembly: is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself.
- Collective Worship: is a gathering of a 'collection' of people of diverse, religious, agnostic and non-religious backgrounds and does not pre-suppose any particular religious commitment.

NB: We note that Collective Worship and Assembly are not one and the same thing. They are, in essence, different from each other, but in practice they often overlap.

Legal rationale

- Collective Worship is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school. This requires worship to be consistent with the principles and practices of the Church of England and will, therefore be wholly Christian in character.
- The 1988 Education Reform Act states that all Collective Worship should be part of a broad and balanced curriculum, which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural and mental and physical development of pupils and society.
- All schools – including church schools – must provide a daily act of Collective Worship for all registered pupils.

Rationale – Religious/Educational

Collective Worship:

- Gives children the opportunity to enter into experiences which lie at the heart of religion, helping them to learn about religious worship and providing a framework for later understanding;
- fosters a reverential attitude to God;
- encourages pupils to consider fundamental questions about the purpose of being and about moral and ethical stances;
- provides an opportunity to participate in religious worship;
- allows us to learn and celebrate values we hold to be important;
- brings children together, enabling them to experience the security of belonging to a community with an identity of its own;
- is the source of much interesting and thought provoking knowledge;
- makes an important, though not exclusive, contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Aims and Principles

“Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.” (DfEE –Circular 1/94)

The following principles guide the approach to Collective Worship at Webber's:

- Collective Worship should have a sense of occasion;
- Collective Worship should provide experiences within which pupils’ spiritual development may flourish;
- Collective Worship should be a means of expressing the ethos and values of the school;
- Collective Worship should be educational and should contribute to the Religious Education of all pupils;
- Collective Worship should be shaped to the needs of the school, (time, place, content, style, etc.);
- we should provide a varied pattern of worship to broaden pupils’ experience of its’ different forms;
- Collective Worship should recognise that the school includes children from different religious and non-religious backgrounds;
- during Collective Worship some will be worshipping and some will be experiencing something approaching worship; others will be finding out what it is like to worship by being with those who are;
- Collective Worship is invitational in nature.

Objectives

The objectives of Collective Worship are to:

- Affirm the Christian faith and the Christian status of Jesus as the Son of God;
- introduce pupils to the practice of religious worship through music, story, poetry, drama and prayer;
- create a warm, caring and respectful atmosphere conducive to worship; including the manner of entry and exit;
- encourage, in children, a thoughtful and reflective attitude;
- help pupils experience a sense of awe, wonder, reverence and inner stillness;
- enable pupils to use silence for reflection and contemplation;
- raise pupils' curiosity about the ultimate mysteries of life;
- enable pupils to learn about and consider in depth Christian teaching, Christian festivals and biblical material;
- help pupils appreciate that we are 'stewards' of God's world;
- enable pupils to reflect upon their own beliefs in relation to those of others;
- enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- guide children towards the spiritual and religious options open to them;
- help children distinguish between right and wrong;
- affirm pupils' personal worth and responsibility;
- celebrate individual and collective achievements;
- develop a sense of community within the school
- celebrate religious festivals and special occasions with specified worship.

Management of Collective Worship

The Local Schools Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the foundation of the school is honoured and that the worship policy is firmly based upon the intentions of the Trust Deed;
- ensuring that the Collective Worship Policy is put into practice and monitored by the Local Schools Committee;

The Collective Worship Leader - has responsibility for managing the worship on a day to day basis, ensuring that all legal requirements are complied with. The leader also keeps in touch with national developments in school worship and acts in an advisory capacity, supporting colleagues.

Monitoring and evaluating - is an on-going process carried out on a weekly and termly basis so that an effective review can take place by the appointed date.

Organisation

Daily acts of Collective Worship take place. Each week collective worship follows a key virtue linked to character development and uses biblical parables to support in understanding this virtue. The structure of collective worship may include music, a song of praise, a story or talk, a reading from the Bible, a period of reflection, a prayer, the Lord's Prayer and a reminder each day of the theme for the week. Each class has a reflective area and display to chart and evidence learning within each theme.

The school worships in church as often as possible. Dates are decided in collaboration with the local church. All children attend church with their class at least once each term, as well as for significant Christian festivals.

Elements of Worship

Atmosphere - Quiet, orderly conduct and respectful attitudes on entering, leaving and throughout the act of worship are expected. Staff presence and participation enhances this atmosphere.

Music - is played at the beginning and end of collective worship

Stories and talks - are carefully chosen to fulfill the objectives of Collective Worship. Stories of a religious or secular nature may be used, whilst personal anecdotes from pupils, teachers and visitors are effective in expressing that which is important in our own lives. Particular emphasis is laid upon helping children to understand themselves better, to develop empathy and to face up to moral issues.

Songs - are chosen from a wide variety of traditional and modern hymns. Some are learned by heart and Sign Supported English is incorporated. Hymns and songs create the opportunity for children to express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to put into words. They also provide a real source of pleasure.

Prayer and reflection - is the most personal part of an act of worship. Collective Worship in school should provide opportunities for children to be taken to the threshold of prayer, and to cross it if they wish, in a way that respects the integrity of all present. Participation in prayer can never be imposed but we stress the need for stillness, reflection and respect from everyone.

Silence, written prayers, impromptu prayers, The Lord's Prayer, The Grace, the School Prayer and children's prayers may be used. At the start of worship, a candle is lit to provide a focus for pupils' thoughts. Reflection and thinking time are given. Some direction by the leader in order to focus pupils' responses may be required.

Scripture - verses may be quoted from the Bible. Longer passages may be used as readings.

Presentation - sets the tone within the act of worship. In keeping with the reverent atmosphere, use is also made of visual aids, artefacts, drama and demonstration.

Content Planning – the responsibility for planning lies with the Religious Education and Collective Worship Subject Leader. Plans and schedules should be approved by the Head Teacher. Suggestions and requests from Staff are welcome.

Themes will:

- Have a specifically Christian focus;
- be concerned with common virtues held by religious and non-religious people alike, such as 'respect', 'perseverance' and 'courage';
- be related to the school community and often illustrated through stories; Collective
- linked with RE and the Curriculum wherever possible.

Role of Collective Worship Leader:

- To write the Collective Worship policy in consultation with the Head Teacher and Local Schools Committee;
- to ensure that all staff are aware of and use the policy document;
- to review the policy on a regular basis;
- to plan a balanced overview of worship based on Diocesan guidelines, to include reference to the main festivals in the Christian year;
- to draw up a Collective Worship rota;
- to involve colleagues, pupils and visitors in worship;
- to ensure that Collective Worship maintains a high profile in the School Development Plan;
- to monitor and evaluate, with others, Collective Worship in all its forms;
- to report findings to the Head Teacher and Link Members of the Local Schools Committee;
- to arrange INSET for staff;
- to keep up to date with recent publications, attend Diocesan courses and disseminate information and feedback to staff;
- to liaise with the Local Schools Committee and Diocesan Officers on matters relating to Collective Worship.

Monitoring and Evaluating of Collective Worship

Themes for Collective Worship are noted on the Collective Worship rota, a copy of which is displayed in the staffroom. Assessment of Collective Worship is carried out jointly by the Collective Worship/RE Leader, in collaboration with the Head Teacher, through:

- Checking that practice meets the aims and objectives;
- observation of children's attentiveness and level of interest;
- working with the Ethos Group of the School Council to improve and develop practice from a pupil perspective;
- comments from Governors and visitors to the school;
- comments from parents;
- the extent to which Collective Worship influences pupils' attitudes and character throughout the school day;
- discussion at staff meetings to update information as and when necessary;
- evaluation with whole staff once per term during staff meeting.

Equal opportunities:

- all pupils have equal opportunity to take part in Collective Worship and to benefit from the experience;
- the school prospectus informs parents of their right to withdraw pupils from Collective Worship. Such pupils would be fully supervised in another part of the school should the situation arise;
- understanding of other religions is actively encouraged.