

LETHBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

BACKGROUND TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT OUR SCHOOL

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main ‘nominally’ Christian, but we do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are an increasing number of children who are from non-religious backgrounds and some from religions other than Christianity. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

We would ask any parent considering withdrawing their child from daily worship to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education. Any children who are withdrawn will be supervised by an adult, however this may not be their own teacher or TA. Staff may also withdraw from worship.

Collective Worship at Lethbridge Primary is first and foremost for the educational and spiritual benefit of its pupils. It is a shared activity, which allows a variety of responses. It is an inclusive activity, which builds with the broad dimensions of the curriculum. The creation of atmosphere is assisted by appropriate music, visual foci and symbols. Opportunity for reflection and responses, prayer, story, drama and art are also used to appeal to the pupils’ imagination.

SOME DEFINITIONS

Collective worship

Collective Worship in school has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring “collective” not “corporate” worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worth of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

Worship of a broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character”, and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

VALUES AND AIMS

We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of the other people in every day situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

OBJECTIVES

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community, the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....;
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

PLANNING

In our school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. Assemblies will take place in the hall as a whole school, team group, key stage or primary split group (i.e. half the school vertically).

Day	KS1	KS2
Monday	Whole School or Key Stage Assembly SLT/Visitor Led	
Tuesday	Individual Class Assembly led by class teacher	Individual Class Assembly led by class teacher
Wednesday	Key Stage/Singing Assembly with WC	
Thursday	Class/Year Group/Whole school Assembly <i>Primary split groups, usually led by a class or year group. Parents are invited to these assemblies In term 5 these assemblies are led by Year Group Teachers</i>	
Friday	Whole School Celebration Assembly	

Visitors who lead Monday assemblies are made aware of the school values and may choose to use the value as a focus for their assembly. Themes which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar are also used by staff leading worship.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship and we have good links with those who visit us regularly to lead worship.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

At this school we evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- Good order with an atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- A sense of occasion
- Enrichment of pupil's experience through a diverse approach

SOME CHALLENGES

Staff non-contact time

We appreciate the need for staff to have some time during the school day set aside for planning and preparation. We also recognise the value of the whole school, including staff being involved in our school worship, this takes place on Friday during celebration assembly where all staff and pupils come together for assembly. During the Monday assembly staff have the opportunity to meet with their teaching assistants (this assembly will be led by the head/deputy teacher).

Song/music

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and can unify and uplift the school community. A bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types is available on the teaching resource drive A -Assembly

During our assemblies we take time to consider carefully the words of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

Prayer

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to our prayers which distance children, but give them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g..I am going to pray, please listen if you want to join in at the end you can say Amen , or 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian prayer...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

***Reviewed May 2017
Approved by Governors
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