

Collective Worship Policy

Introduction

Collective Worship at Hanging Heaton CE (VC) Junior and Infant School aims to promote and develop the Christian ethos that exists in school. Collective Worship makes a valuable contribution to the 'whole child' and helps to prepare them for the opportunities and experiences of adult life. Many of the aims of the school are addressed and reinforced during Collective Worship. Through Collective Worship we provide an opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider moral and cultural issues and to explore their own beliefs. Whilst our Collective Worship is broadly Christian and reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief as determined in the Trust Deed, we ensure that we encourage respect for all people regardless of race, faith, gender, disability and special educational need. Our Collective Worship reflects the multicultural and equality policies that we have in school, the uniqueness of us all and the cultural diversity of society is often celebrated.

Legal Requirements

Collective Worship is the responsibility of the Governing Body in consultation with the Head teacher.

- It should be carried out in accordance with the school's founding Trust Deed and its controlled status; we do this by following the guidance given by the Wakefield Diocese and the Kirklees Education Authority guidance and Syllabus.
- The school must provide a daily act of Collective Worship for all pupils. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g.: whole school, Key stage or class unit.
- A statement must be included in the school prospectus that makes it clear that parents have the right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship on religious grounds. Should children be withdrawn, the school must provide adequate supervision to ensure their safety and they must not be made to feel isolated or different. Staff who exclude children (other than for behaviour issues)from Collective Worship for lessons such as music or reading etc. are breaking the law.

Aims for Collective Worship

- To enable pupils to explore a variety of forms of worship, so that those with a religious commitment may have their experience of worship deepened and broadened, and so that the uncommitted may begin to feel for themselves something of what it means for others to worship
- To enable pupils to approach the 'threshold' of worship by encouraging 'worshipful attitude,' that is an attitude characterised by feelings of awe, wonder, being uplifted, elation, deep appreciation, gratitude, respect and reverence.
- To enable pupils to use silence for reflection, contemplation, meditation and, where appropriate, prayer.

- To heighten pupils' awareness of questions relating to the ultimate mysteries of life, and of beliefs held and commitments made by themselves and others in response to such questions.
- To make explicit and to celebrate what has meaning, value and purpose for the pupils as individuals, for the school, and for the wider community.
- To celebrate achievements and special occasions in respect of individuals, the school and the wider community.
- To celebrate difference and diversity.
- To heighten aesthetic awareness and to enable pupils to appreciate the use of symbolism and religious language to express feelings of belief.

The Environment

Collective Worship usually takes place in the main hall but could take place in Church, classrooms or even outside for example, as appropriate. The children are responsible for preparing the hall and liaising with the leader of Collective Worship regarding music or any other special requirements. Music selected on a weekly basis and the title and composer are identified, hymns wherever possible should reflect the theme of the worship.

We try to create a calm respectful atmosphere and include times of quiet reflection and prayer; the children are expected to display the highest standards of behaviour. When selecting hymns and prayers we are careful to introduce them with words that are sensitive to, or explicitly acknowledge the different standpoints that the children may have e.g.; 'Christians believe...' Children are also invited to either share the sentiments of a prayer in their own words or have time to reflect. A prayer candle is lit to help focus pupils' attention to this time of peaceful thought and prayer.

The Content

We try to make our Collective Worship interesting, thought provoking and stimulating. We present them in a wide variety of ways using music, drama, mime, dance, poetry, stories and prayers. We have a wide range of material in school to support teachers planning and to present to children. Teachers are encouraged to use resources such as OHP, DVD, tape recorders, radio, music and artefacts in order to create interest and enjoyment.

Collective Worship should be a special time and pupils attending should feel calm, relaxed, and safe and secure, the atmosphere should be distinctly spiritual.

In order to further our Collective Worship we have tried to make it more coherent and that they too, as in all our teaching, we provide for continuity and progression- without taking away the ability to be responsive to the world, local and school events. Real experiences still provide the most meaningful Collective Worship and we are keen to retain this flexibility.

Planning

In planning our overview we have referred to the LA Agreed Syllabus and Diocesan Guidance. We have allocated different aspects to each leader of Worship. We have then tried to allocate areas to terms in which they are appropriate. There is detail in the overview to ensure a balanced provision but staff are encouraged to use it as a starting point, one aspect e.g. 'God is loving and giving', may last for several weeks. This will enable the leaders to build on the theme week by week and thus promote continuity and progression. Staff are asked to highlight what they have covered on the overview and to make an evaluative statement after each session, as a manageable record and to inform future planning. The overview was put together following discussions with staff and building on staff expertise. Staff meetings are held by the leaders of Collective Worship to co-ordinate provision.

The local clergy may lead Collective Worship and their contributions are greatly appreciated. Members of staff are present and the structure of Collective Worship remains consistent. Members of the Governing Body, particularly Foundation Governors may be involved in offering support. Governing Body members have access to Collective Worship planning.

