Cannon Lane PrimarySchool

Collective Worship Guidance

September 2021

RATIONALE

A daily act of Collective Worship is required under the Education Reform Acts 1988, 1996. At Cannon Lane Primary School, Collective Worship will reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief. This is always done showing the whole school approach to values and which includes Respect, Empathy and Acceptance.

Families who send their children to our school have a wide range of religious beliefs. 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.

Throughout the school, collective worship is appropriate to the age, aptitude, and family backgrounds of our pupils. Traditionally collective worship takes place during assemblies. These are completed as phases, classes and key stages.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a daily act of worship takes place to meet legal requirements and to further the spiritual development of our pupils.

This policy is underpinned with regards to the United Nations Rights of the Child:
Article 3 - All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for the child.
Article 29 – Education must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.
Article 31- Children have the right to take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities

SOME DEFINITIONS

Collective worship

Worship from within a faith tradition 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 worthy 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.

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. In particular school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community where every member of staff and every pupil feel involved, which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

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

- develop children's spiritual and moral awareness as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- promote our school's values-based education and ethos, fostering a feeling of unity within the school
- grow in understanding of the feelings of 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
- encourage a reflective approach to life
- acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

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 and 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.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

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

During our acts of collective worship we expect:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- A sense of occasion
- Good order
- Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

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 distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of

stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian/ Hindu/ Muslim prayer/poem/reading…' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions. It is important to allow children to reflect on the purpose of the worship through encouraging thinking time through sentence starters such as: I wonde..., Let us reflect... Think about how you…

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.

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. All visitors are issued with this policy and, unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the theme for the week.

We have made links with some people who visit us regularly to lead worship.

Procedures

- Assemblies take place daily and include singing assemblies and classroom based assemblies.
- EYFS, Key Stage One, Year 3 & 4 and Year 5 & 6 have separate assemblies which are clearly shown on the timetable
- Assemblies may be taken by: the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers, class teachers, pupils, visitors or parents.
- In order to ensure the high status of assemblies, all staff in each phase will be required to attend.
- The music leader will liaise with assembly leaders to ensure a rich variety of music to listen to on the way in and out of assembly as well as relevant songs to sing that link to the assembly theme.
- Parents have the right to withdraw pupils from acts of Collective Worship (assemblies of a religious nature) upon written submission to the Headteacher. Generally this is not seen as necessary as we plan our assemblies to be as inclusive as possible.