

Collective Worship Policy



Introduction

The community of Blenheim Primary School in Leeds is rich in its breadth of religious traditions. Many faiths are represented at our school, as are the wishes of families with no particular religious affiliation.

The school has due regard to the Leeds agreed syllabus on RE and Collective Worship and Leeds SACRE guidance on collective worship in planning the opportunities and experiences we offer children (appendix 1). Collective worship is therefore not of a broadly Christian character but encompasses all faith groups, providing opportunities to celebrate and reflect on all major religious festivals and holy days.

The purpose of Collective Worship

The main aims of collective worship are as follows:

- To contribute to a sense of unity and community for the school as a whole
- To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Assemblies should:

- provide children with the knowledge and insight into values and beliefs that enable them to reflect on their experiences in a way which develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge (spiritual)
- teach the principles which distinguish right from wrong (moral)
- encourage children to relate positively to others, take responsibility, participate fully in the community and develop an understanding of citizenship (social)
- teach children to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures (cultural)

The principles of Collective Worship

At Blenheim Primary School all assemblies/acts of collective worship are based on the principles that they should be inclusive, educational and spiritual.

To ensure assemblies are inclusive we aim to ensure that they:

- are pupil-centred, related to children's own experiences and relevant to children's concerns
- acknowledge diversity
- involve children as active participants
- meet the needs of the children
- foster a sense of community

To ensure assemblies are educational we aim to ensure that they:

- are learning experiences
- are well-planned
- relate to other curriculum activities
- provide the school with opportunities to reflect on the education it provides
- celebrate educational achievements
- are consistent with the aims and values of the school

To ensure assemblies are spiritual we aim to ensure that they:

- provide a time to be still, pray and reflect
- be a special time – conducive to worship
- enable children to feel calm, relaxed and secure
- include a variety of words, music and images
- provide an opportunity for children to participate in collective worship

Whilst it is not essential to say a prayer, this is a desirable characteristic. Children should be asked to join in with the others in assembly and ‘pause and think’ or **‘join in the school prayer’ (appendix 2)**. The intention is to take children forward and avoid passive attendance.

As a result the main aims of Collective Worship can be summarised as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for an experience of worship
- To provide opportunities for children to reflect on the values of the school community and the community it serves
- To deepen and widen children’s emotional responses
- To enable children to gain insights into ways in which people express themselves within their faith commitments and to be sensitive to those different responses
- To develop a sense of awe and wonder, interdependence with the natural world, pattern, sequence and order, self-worth and value of others
- To develop awareness that life involves choices of belief, attitude, behaviour and relationships and that there are issues of meaning, purpose and value in life

Planning and implementing Collective Worship

A list of themes is published at the beginning of each school term and these form the basis of the daily assembly. Where possible, links are made to whole school initiatives or issues of national importance, e.g. remembrance and anti-bullying. The school will also periodically invite representatives of different faiths from the community to participate in assemblies.

Assemblies are planned on a weekly basis. The themes:

- promote spiritual, cultural, social and moral development
- provide opportunities to celebrate religious festivals and share stories from various religions

- enable the children to reflect on matters of importance
- offer the children the opportunity to respond through a variety of activities, songs, music-making, drama, role-play, visual arts, silent thought, prayer and discussion

The arrangements for the daily assembly, including acts of collective worship, are as follows:

Monday	Whole-School Assembly introducing Ethos
Tuesday	Statement
Wednesday	Singing Assembly
Thursday	Class Assembly
Friday	Whole School Assembly relating to Ethos Statement Achievement Celebration Assembly

Monitoring and Review

This policy has been updated in February 2016. It will be reviewed and revised in the Autumn term 2016, following the publication of the new Leeds Agreed Syllabus.

Appendix 1

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SACRE** **STATEMENT ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP (Amended)**

The Education Reform Act (ERA) builds upon the provision for collective worship specified in the Education Act of 1944. It also introduces two important changes: flexibility of organisation and the nature of collective worship itself. With regard to flexibility, the Act allows schools to organise daily collective worship for the whole school or separate groups of pupils and at any time during the school day.

For County schools, the nature of collective worship is dealt with in section 7 of the Act. Worship is stated to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" [7. (1)]. This is further defined as reflecting "the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular denomination" [7. (2)].

Taking any school term as a whole, most such acts must comply with the expression "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" [7. (3)]. At the same time, the character of worship must take into account the general character of the pupils' family backgrounds as well as their ages and aptitudes [7. (5)].

For Voluntary schools the character and content of collective worship will continue to be determined by governing bodies. For Special schools, ERA Schedule 1 revised section 12 of the Education Act 1981 to underline the need for such RE and collective worship as may be practicable. For Nursery schools or nursery classes in primary schools the ERA requirement concerning the act of collective worship does not apply.

It is significant that the ERA requires collective worship not corporate worship. The use of "collective" recognises that pupils have different beliefs and attitudes and that assembling together is an educational activity. The Act also recognises that worship is not that of church worship since nowhere does the Act refer to or concern itself with styles or forms of worship. It does not prescribe hymns, prayers or Christian belief and worship can refer to anything a community celebrates and values. The expression "the broad traditions of Christian belief" ensures that no denominational presentation of Christianity can be part of the educational process. The broad traditions could encompass such themes as forgiveness, justice, love of one's neighbour, festivals, the moral and spiritual dimensions of human experience as well as the teachings of Jesus. It will also embody the issues and questions which Christians, along with other people, address as fundamental to life and living, e.g. stewardship.

The Act encourages schools to take into account any relevant circumstances relating to the family background of pupils. For most schools this would certainly lead to collective acts which embrace relevant themes shared by Christian and non-Christian alike.

Over a term "most such acts" should be of the character set out in section 7. This can be taken to mean that only just over half the collective acts of worship need to be Christian. Of those which are "Christian" the Act says that they can be "wholly or mainly" of a broadly Christian character. "Mainly" suggests considerable variation within an individual collective act is possible. If the Act is interpreted in as flexible a way as possible, then collective worship can continue to build upon the good practice already established in our schools. For the sake of school unity and ethos the application of the Act in this way provides a positive way forward.

This statement has been prepared by the Chief Education Officer in accordance with the views set out by the Leeds SACRE at its meeting on April 5th 1989, with slight amendments, August 1989.

Appendix 2

School prayer (as written by the children)

Let Us Pray...

Thank you for making us and our world.

Thank you for our school and our chance to learn.

Please help us to be a peaceful, tolerant school where we respect everyone.

Help us to help each other and be generous with our time and thoughtful in all we do.

Help us to be honest at all times, even when it is difficult.

Help us to learn confidence – to show all of our abilities and take pride in them.

AMEN