



# ORCHARD VALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

## **Introduction**

This document is a statement of the aim and practices of Worship in school. Arrangements for Worship in school are made by the local governing body in consultation with the Executive Head and the Head of School.

## **Rationale**

We understand Worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective Worship involves the members of the school coming together and participating in an act of worship.

We conduct Worship in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school. While acts of worship in our school are wholly Christian, we also recognise worship that reflects other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

## **Legal Requirement**

Daily collective worship is a legal requirement for all pupils in a state school. This should take place on school premises and be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character reflecting the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination".

Schools are expected to adopt a proper educational approach to worship, and not to assume a uniform level of understanding and commitment. Collective worship can take place in groups other than whole school at any time of the school day.

Worship distinctive of any denomination (Christian or other religion) is not normally permitted on school premises during school time. Schools should ensure that relevant information is available to parents regarding arrangements for collective worship and rights of withdrawal.

It is the legal right of parents to withdraw children from worship, where the school will make alternative provision. Pupils can only be withdrawn from school for alternative worship at the beginning or end of any school session

## **What is Collective Worship?**

"Collective worship, which is different from corporate worship (worship among a body of believers), is what happens when a diverse group comes together to explore and celebrate its highest common values without violating the integrity of individuals and minorities".

### **General Aims**

Collective Worship should be a time which is meaningful and educative for the children and should also foster a sense of awe and wonder of the world in which they live.

We at Orchard Vale are committed to developing the social, personal, moral and spiritual wellbeing of all our pupils, and believe that Collective Worship has a vital role to play in this.

We take seriously the directives from the DfE and S.A.C.R.E's and have used their guidelines to form the basis for our 'Collective Worship'.

We realise the need for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating practice within Collective Worship.

### **Specific Aims**

We have developed and keep a record of the themes and content of our acts of worship so that a judgement can be reached on whether the majority of these are of a broadly Christian character. We would hope that worship:

- Is varied in grouping, content and leadership
- Is appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of our pupils
- Is challenging and enriching
- Takes place in an appropriate setting
- Provides opportunities for pupils to participate in planning, presentation and response.

We accept that worship is generally understood to imply the recognition of a supreme being.

With the words and activities undertaken we aim to recognise the existence of a deity,

Due to this our Collective Worship will include:

- Sharing values of a Christian nature
- Opportunities for prayer or meditation

- Opportunities for reflect upon reading from holy texts or other writing which bring out religious/moral themes
- Music, drama and dance

## **Organisation**

We recognise the need for creating a 'sense of occasion' for collective worship but also appreciate the difficulty of meaningfully discussing spiritual/moral issues with the full primary age range.

Therefore only 1 of the 5 weekly assemblies is taken with the whole school together.

Key Stage 2 meet twice a week for a full assembly, which deals with one of the listed topics. In addition there is a daily participation in various 'Circle Time' themes.

Key Stage 1 meet once a week for a full assembly based on one of the listed topics. In addition they have 3 weekly meetings of classes or full year groups to participate in various 'Circle Time' themes.

An act of collective worship should last about 10 – 15 minutes. However it is recognised that celebratory assemblies may last longer.

During Collective Worship the hall must be considered a quiet room for individual reflection, an idea which should be sponsored by teachers themselves.

Consequently it is not a time for raising disciplinary issues – this must be at a separate time as it distracts from spiritual quality of the gathering. Suitable music is usually played before and after a gathering to help create a reflective atmosphere.

Themes for assemblies have been collated by the co-ordinator after consultation with other teachers. In order to promote individuality of teaching styles it will be up to each teacher to decide how they will approach their given theme. Good practice in the past has produced a rota system with built in flexibility, this will continue.

We try to include speakers particularly our local clergy and visitors from other local churches, on a regular basis, and to explore other resources in the community.

The co-ordinator, in consultation with the Head of School, monitors effective delivery in this area and reviews and evaluates on an annual basis. Changes will then be made as necessary.

We work a 2-year rolling programme leaving flexibility for pursuing relevant issues as they may occur.

We aim to make parents aware of our policy for collective worship and their rights of withdrawal. If after consultation with the Head of school, a parent does choose to withdraw their child it is up to the school to make alternative arrangements both in accommodation and supervision.

Parents can ask to supervise children themselves (as in the case with Jehovah's Witnesses) and must be allocated accommodation. A parent might request alternative instruction for their child i.e. Muslim teachings; the school should undertake to provide this as long as they can do so at no extra cost.

### **Friday whole school gathering – led by Head of School or Deputy Head of School**

Obviously 'happy' assemblies depend very much upon what activities have been undertaken by the children during the preceding week and class assemblies usually reflect current topic work. We try to encourage pride of achievement, a sense of community and shared values.

Therefore we are celebrating our highest common values and raising the sights of the school community.

Although aspects of these assemblies are religious, they often involve broad human experience, which is not explicitly religious, however a part of each assembly is specifically set aside as worship. It must be noted that children obtain most enjoyment from watching other children perform and performing children welcome the challenge of being in the 'limelight'.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Collective worship is good when:

- It fosters a sense of community and shared experience
- It is challenging and enjoyable, extending pupils understanding and imagination

- It fosters a thought-provoking atmosphere allowing for spiritual reflection and response
- It provides opportunities for pupils to respond to specific accounts of Christian and other experience (personal, biographical, scriptural) and to engage in, or observe, religious activities (prayer, singing, silence).
- It encourages pupil participation, and enables them to practise a certain skills such as being still, listening, saying or singing words together, as well as performance skills in speaking and playing instruments.
- It is appropriate to an educational setting, taking account of pupils family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes.

## GUIDANCE TO TEACHERS TO AID THE DELIVERY OF ASSEMBLIES

### What do I do with my 15 minutes?

The following A-Z of means and moods of worship may offer food for thought in extending our repertoire of appropriate experiences.

<b>Means of Worship</b>	<b>Moods of Worship</b>
Artefacts/natural materials	Asking/Petition
Collaboration	Awe
Communal action	Celebration
Drama/Mime/Role play	Community
Environment	Compassion
Listening	Delight
Meditation	Giving
Movement/Dance	Hope
Music	Joy
Personal Experiences	Mystery
Pictures/images/icons/slides	Peace
Poetry	Praise
Prayer	Reassurance
Readings – sacred/secular	Reflection
Ritual	Respect
Silence/Stillness	Response
Singing	Stillness
Speaking/Choral Speaking	Thanksgiving
Story – Fable, biography	
Fiction/Parable	

### Ways of organising the assembly (more easily done in smaller group assemblies) might be: -

- Paired discussion on given theme
- A quiet reflective moment when hall is lit with candles
- Visualisation – the child is in the story
- Story read – with shapes or pictures to illustrate
- Looking at contrasting pictures bad/good e.g. rubbish dump/ mountains in white snow
- A brick wall (blanks) – fill in ideas to strengthen ethos of school

**Review procedure.**

This policy was discussed with governor and staff representatives in February 2015 and presented to the governing body in February 2015. It will be subjected to a bi-annual review.

**Policy approved by governing body February 2015**  
**The policy will be reviewed in February 2017**

\*This review may take place sooner due to government changes in the teaching of SRE.