

Valley Road School

Collective Worship Policy

Aim

The aim of the collective worship policy is to provide the opportunity for pupils to:

- reflect on values that are of a broadly Christian nature and on their own beliefs
- develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- respond to the worship offered.

Statutory Duty of 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”. All maintained schools provide daily collective worship for registered pupils (apart from those who have been withdrawn by their parents). This is usually provided within a daily assembly.

Valley Road Primary School is a multicultural and inclusive school with children from all faiths and children of no faith. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from. 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 Headteacher 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 Any children who are withdrawn will be supervised by an adult, however this may not be their own teacher or TA.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 Valley Road 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 may be assisted by appropriate music, visual foci and symbols. Opportunity for reflection and responses, story, drama and art are also used to appeal to the pupils’ imagination.

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. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect 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 must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when giving a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. 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 everyday 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
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person’s life stance, whether it be religious or not
- Collectively celebrate achievements

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 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

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