



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

This policy has been written taking into account our school's ethos, vision and values.

As a school we take pride in our own core values of Respect, Resourceful, Responsible, Reflective and Resilience. These core values are promoted and celebrated where possible and underpin our school ethos. We also believe in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by providing positive experiences within the curriculum and through the local community.

1. PRINCIPLES

The religious Education non-statutory guidance 2010 states that one of the aims of education is to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.

Collective worship is the gathering of a group, whether as a class, year group or whole school, with the purpose of showing appreciation and providing a time for personal reflection while being mindful to follow statutory requirements to acts of worship which are broadly Christian.

Acts of worship are there first and foremost for the educational benefit of pupils. As well as enhancing the spiritual dimension of human experience, they can promote moral, aesthetic, and creative awareness and help children recognise, reflect upon and evaluate the meaning of their own existence and their relationship with others.

It follows therefore that like any other educational activity worship needs to be effectively planned, resourced and monitored. This has implications for the curriculum planning, staffing and positions of responsibility.

The fact that the Act uses the word "collective", not corporate, indicates that worship is a shared activity which allows a variety of responses. We believe that worship is an inclusive not exclusive activity, which has an educational foundation and which seeks to build links with all dimensions of the curriculum. Acts of worship should involve activities in which the values of the school are celebrated, affirmed and reflected upon.

The Act does not define worship. We believe worship is connected with ascribing worth or recognising the worth of someone or something. It can be defined as a response to an experience where the worth of someone or something beyond ourselves is acknowledged. Worship will often involve celebration, thanksgiving, praise, adoration and affirmation and is an expression of humility, awe and mystery. Worship can help pupils to reflect upon those aspects of human life and the natural world, which raise questions of ultimate meaning and purpose.

Worship therefore is a celebration of all that is of supreme worth for a community. It can heighten the value of the curriculum and help to create a sense of purpose and direction in life itself. Therefore worship includes social concerns and personal development as well as religious beliefs and values. Collective acts of worship need to recognise that doubts and anxieties may be present in the hearts and minds of pupils and staff so it is inappropriate to develop worship in a rigid "no questions asked" manner which stifles response. Acts of worship should provide an opportunity for those of any religious faith or none to focus and reflect on stimuli which allow the human spirit to respond with integrity.

The traditional elements of worship such as prayers, hymns and sacred readings have a role to play in collective worship but great care and consideration needs to be given when these stimuli are used to ensure that they are helpful in enhancing the learning experience.

The use of the word collective allows for a variety of responses. For some children the opportunity to worship will be seen as an expression of faith, for some an expression of the desire for faith, for some an expression for an expansion of experience and for some an awareness of the spiritual dimension of life. Worship therefore can cover a spectrum of responses including:

- Awareness of ...
- Appreciation of ...
- Respect for ...
- Preference for ...
- Commitment to ...
- Dedication ...

This range of responses needs to be allowed for at every stage of planning.

2. AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT HAMWORTHY PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

- To foster a sense of fellowship by bringing children together to celebrate values shared by the school and the community
- To encourage the children to reflect on life
- To help children to develop an understanding of the nature and language of worship.
- To help children explore and develop their own spirituality and foster sensitivity to the beliefs, practices and values of others within the school and community.
- To enable children to explore and evaluate their own beliefs whether religious or not in relation to those of others.
- To celebrate special occasions and show appreciation of the gifts and talents of the school community.

3. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

We aim to:

- Celebrate all that is good about life, especially in our school, our local community and our surroundings
- Ensure as far as possible that our assemblies reflect the age, aptitude and background of the children
- Give time for silent reflection and exploration of inner space
- Do everything possible to create an atmosphere conducive to worship

4. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT HAMWORTHY PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

a) Organisation

Collective worship is a daily act for all registered pupils (apart from where parents have used their right to withdraw their children) and forms a part of the whole schools assembly

times. Assemblies provide a meeting point for the whole curriculum. They can be a time for articulating the school's value and to motivate caring action; as well as sharing curriculum, individual achievements and other information. It is essential that those planning assemblies bear in mind the place and time of acts of worship within them. It is difficult for children to respond to a reflective thought if this is accompanied by a range of administrative and disciplinary matters.

In addition to this either individual classes or year groups meet together to celebrate successes, skills and talents as well as developing children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Acts of worship at Hamworthy Park Junior School should reflect the **broad** traditions of Christian **belief**. It is important that children are helped to become aware of the ways in which the Christian faith influences all aspects of life. Within this framework certain key concepts which reflect the broadest traditions of Christian belief can be developed. First and foremost is the Christian understanding of love. Other concepts which are broadly but not exclusively Christian include

Compassion	Humility	Justice
Trust	Courage and integrity	Co-operation and service
Forgiveness	Respect for life	Honesty and truthfulness
Mercy	Value of all individuals	Responsibility

- Consideration must be given to the pupil's ages, attitudes and family backgrounds when planning worship. Many children have little or no familiarity with religious worship either in the home or the community. Many non-worshipping parents however are keen for their children to learn Christian values which they see as a basis for life.
- The responsibility for ensuring that the law is fulfilled lies with the Head teacher and Governors.
- Collective worship should be planned for. Themes are identified which can link to
 - a) PSHE/Jigsaw The school's aims/values
 - b) RE scheme
 - c) Significant dates/events in the religious calendar
 - d) Other aspects of the curriculum
 - e) Celebrating children's successes
- By their very nature acts of worship should involve the wider community. Members of the community are invited into the school to share their experiences. Visitors provide interest, change, and a different experience. However, it is the school's responsibility to provide clarity of purpose of the visit.
- The roots of worship are awe, wonder, reflection and joy can be part of an assembly programme which encourages spiritual development. The traditional elements of worship, such as prayers, music and sacred writings, can be supported by other elements to create stimulating and imaginative assemblies.

These include:

Poetry	Art	Pupils contributions
Mime	Creative silence	Interviews
Audio-visual aids	Stories and readings	Drama
Songs and other forms of music	Display of artefacts	

- Due to the complexities and sensitivities involved in collective acts of worship it is vital that they are led with care and understanding. There are a number of skills which both children and staff require if acts of worship are to be fulfilling and stimulating experiences. These include the ability:
 - ❖ To be still and not fear silence.
 - ❖ To contemplate and reflect upon that which is offered.
 - ❖ To use a range of senses, e.g. listen, see, touch, which leads to a greater awareness of the spiritual dimension.
 - ❖ To appreciate the intrinsic worth of self and others.
 - ❖ To identify with others and their experiences.
 - ❖ To respond to exposure of appropriate stimuli.

b) MONITORING

Monitoring of school worship needs to be exercised with care and discretion not just to ensure that the law is carried out but that the activities presented are educationally valid and worthwhile. In observing acts of worship some key questions need to be addressed. These include:

- a) Is the worship appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the children?
- b) How involved are pupils in terms of active participation and opportunity for reflection and follow up?
- c) Does it fulfil the requirements of the Act in being "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character"?
- d) Does the collective worship demonstrate evidence of celebration, affirmation and exploration?
- e) Is the climate and environment helpful in creating an atmosphere which is conducive to reflection and response?
- f) Does the worship contribute towards children's spiritual development?
- g) Are there opportunities to suggest that the act of worship is a meaningful experience for children?
- h) How does the worship accord with the worship plan for the school?

A record of dates, times and content of worship acts need to be maintained to ensure coherence and to satisfy enquiries. It is the responsibility of Senior Management and the Governors to monitor school worship.

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the policies for Equality, Inclusion and Health and Safety.