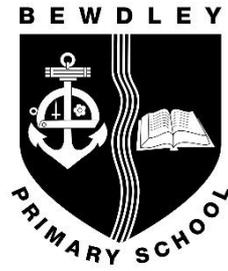


Reviewed Feb 2018
Next Review Feb 2021



Collective Worship Policy

Introduction:

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” and should “...reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief”. This should be the case for the majority of the time. It can contain non-Christian elements or on occasions contain no Christian elements, provided that throughout each term, the majority of worship complies with the broad traditions of Christian belief. They must also be: “appropriate, to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils” and “must not be denominational”.

The collective worship policy at Bewdley Primary School pays due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance offered by the local authority through its SACRE. Collective worship is a valued and valuable part of school life and is taken seriously, because it shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school.

Within our school (non-denominational), there are children from Christian backgrounds, children from religions other than Christianity and children from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in including our children in worship, we have to consider the backgrounds that our children come from. It is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert pupils. The faith background of both the staff and pupils’ families is respected at all times.

The Head Teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body, however this responsibility may be shared with the Worship Coordinator.

Collective Worship

Worship from within a faith 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 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. At Bewdley Primary School, we aim for worship here to develop the feeling of belonging to a community, which is essential for personal development and spiritual

Worship of a broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character,” reflecting 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 at Bewdley Primary 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. However, pupils should be given the choice about whether they address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics and values of Christianity are shared by many other faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

Values and Aims

At Bewdley Primary School, we believe 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;
- respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus;
- acknowledge diversity and affirm each person’s life stance, whether it be religious or not.

Collective worship should be beneficial to the whole school community. It should therefore aim to bring the school community together, in an attitude of reverence and reflection.

Creating effective and meaningful collective worship involves paying attention to:

- the importance of atmosphere;
- the respect of pupil and teacher integrity;
- the promotion of spiritual (not synonymous with religious), moral, social and cultural development. This may include:
 - a recognition of the uniqueness of each individual
 - helping pupils to develop the capacity to transcend the limitations of the physical world
 - helping to lift the horizons of pupils beyond the materialistic
 - being creative
 - considering ultimate questions about the meaning of life in general and pupils' own lives in particular
 - developing positive attitudes and hope.
- a range of experiences

Objectives

At Bewdley Primary School, we see collective 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 our different communities;
- 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 wonder, beauty, joy, heroism, humour, tragedy, sorrow, solemnity etc...;
- 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.
- understand British Values, addressing issues such as: Tolerance and Mutual Respect, Democracy and Individual Liberty.

Practice

Collective worship at Bewdley Primary School (subject to parents' right to withdraw their child/children), is appropriate for, and includes all pupils. The acts of collective worship take place as follows: within whole school assemblies in the Hall on Monday; Tuesday (Singing Assembly); within classrooms on Wednesdays where teachers and pupils can reflect on subjects or issues pertinent to them; Thursday (Open the Book) and Friday (Well Done Assembly).

*

Friday's Well Done Assembly, usually led by the Head Teacher, is * a celebration of pupils' work and achievements throughout the week. Pupils are given special mentions and awarded a Certificate and small reward for outstanding work, deeds or good behaviour, which they share with the school. Achievements outside of school are also celebrated.

Special assemblies

These occur for special occasions or festivals, or significant events during the year and take a variety of forms, which may include a guest speaker. There are also termly swimming and attendance assemblies to celebrate success in these areas and class productions which are a way to share learning experiences with parents/carers and to celebrate pupils' curriculum achievements. Many of these happen at either the end of a term or at the end of the year.

Whenever possible, we do invite parents/carers in to share worship opportunities with the pupils, particularly when we are celebrating pupil achievement.

Methods used

At Bewdley Primary School, we believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods employed, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship and also joy and celebration.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- pupils' contributions;
- sacred and secular stories/readings;
- dance/drama;
- prayer/meditation/songs/hymns/music;
- artefacts/natural materials;
- visual aids/focal points;
- dialogue;
- visitors;
- film clips and pictures
- games and quizzes
- Live music by pupils

Display boards in the hall are used as a focal point for key themes and messages taught during collective worship, as well as a way of celebrating individual and collective achievements within the school such as 'Star of the Week' and 'Accelerated Reader' awards.

Song, music and multimedia

Song, music, videos and other forms of multimedia are powerful means of creating the right atmosphere for collective worship and can unify and uplift the school community. We use a range of resources for music and song and, where possible, use songs and music from a range of cultures. We try to select our songs, music and multimedia carefully to match chosen themes. We make use of the computing technology available to us in order to enhance collective worship, when appropriate.

Every week we have singing practice. During this, we often take time to consider words of songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

Prayer

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 (*saying 'Amen'*) 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. "If you wish to pray, please do so but if not, please think about If you agree with the prayer, you can say 'Amen' at the end, if you wish." In this way, we are able to include most pupils.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond/reflect in a personal way, if they so wish.

Visitors

Pupils enjoy what 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 some links with community groups who visit us regularly to lead worship. This includes various members of the wider church community in Bewdley who do 'Open the Book' Assemblies, which reflect on the stories in the Bible.

Success Criteria

At Bewdley Primary School, we will evaluate our acts of worship against * the following:

- involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils;
- the growth of respect and tolerance within the school community;
- positive response to shared experiences;
- an atmosphere which matches the theme;
- a contribution to individual and community sense of well-being;
- a sense of occasion;

Cont.

- appropriate behaviour;
- staff affirmation;
- a sense of challenge;
- a place in the overall plan of the school;
- enrichment of pupils' experiences.

Withdrawal

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship and staff are also free to withdraw from involvement in this aspect of school life. We request that those who wish to exercise this right inform the Head Teacher in writing so that school records are accurate. We also appreciate opportunities to speak with parents and staff who have concerns about collective worship, and are always keen to develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible. Those pupils who are withdrawn from worship are cared for by a member of the school's staff; parents may provide suitable activities for children who are withdrawn.