



Collective Worship Policy:

Reviewed: July 2016
Review: July 2019

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Collective worship in schools aims to provide the opportunity for pupils to have a time for quiet reflection, to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues; to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship offered or through personal reflections; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

What is Collective Worship?

Collective Worship is a time when the whole school, or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils of different faiths and attitudes an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is not to be equated with corporate worship where participants share the same faith.

Collective Worship Policy

Whilst there are no legal requirements for schools to hold "assemblies", the law states clearly that all pupils (see Right of Withdrawal for exceptions) are required to participate in a daily act of collective worship. The legal requirements allow for a certain degree of flexibility with regard to the nature of "worship" and this document will define Oliver's Battery Primary School's interpretation of those requirements.

Collective Worship at Oliver's Battery Primary School

We have chosen to interpret the concept of "worship" as providing an invaluable opportunity for the school community to focus on and reaffirm those values that are considered to be of supreme worth and importance. Values that are regularly re-visited as themes for collective worship include: unity, nurture, inspire, trust, equality, collaboration, forgiveness, friendship, respect, responsibility, and sacrifice.

Collective Worship contributes significantly to the ethos of Oliver's Battery Primary School and it is our aim that it is a time when the school community can:

- share common aims and values including the School Charter
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore together the world in which we live
- develop a community spirit

We also intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a 'whole' person by providing opportunities to:

- consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- develop their own spirituality
- reinforce positive attitudes
- participate, respond and reflect

Collective worship themes are planned in the school year to acknowledge the significance of key religious festivals from the main religions represented in the school. In line with legislation that collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, we place particular emphasis on the Christian festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Whatever festival, Christian or otherwise, our concern is to explore the reason for celebration. Pupils are not themselves required to “celebrate” religious beliefs which neither they nor their family adhere to.

At Oliver’s Battery Primary School, we believe that collective worship provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by addressing a wide variety of themes and topics, use diverse stimuli and resources and provide pupils with the opportunity to ‘respond’ at their own level. Collective worship makes a vital contribution to the development of pupils in the following areas:

1. Collective worship contributes to the spiritual development of pupils by providing them with the opportunity to:
 - Reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of events, acts, objects and persons;
 - Consider the existence of a deity;
 - Reflect on the beliefs, views and customs of different faiths;
 - Reflecting on the character and achievements of Jesus and Christian leaders.

2. Collective worship contributes to the moral development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:
 - Reflect on matters concerning right and wrong;
 - Hear about incidents in which, and people in whom, goodness and right are exemplified;
 - Learn about religious and other teachings concerning right and wrong.

3. Collective worship contributes to the social development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:
 - Gather with others for a common purpose;
 - Share times of joy and sadness with others;
 - Learn how to behave appropriately within a specific social setting;
 - Increase self-confidence in public speaking/ dramatic performance.

4. Collective worship contributes to the cultural development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:
 - Hear and respond to music from a range of times, places and cultures;
 - Reflect upon ideas concerning the concept of beauty;
 - Appreciate the range of talents and gifts found within the school community and beyond.

5. Collective worship contributes to the intellectual development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:
 - Learn and engage with their minds;
 - Have ideas concerning values confirmed or challenged;
 - Reflect on the importance of learning in the context of our school community;

- Consider the power of words.

The Contribution of Collective Worship to aspects of the Curriculum

Collective Worship time is distinct from curriculum time. However, in Oliver's Battery Primary School, Collective Worship will at times feature in aspects of the curriculum, which will enhance the experiences of pupils by reflecting on the work done in classes. At times, Collective Worship will enrich classwork through its consideration of subject matter from different perspectives.

The Organisation of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is organised to provide a variety of groupings and will take place in the school hall, or one of the multipurpose rooms, or the classroom. The whole school come together once a week for an assembly and is led by a member of the senior leadership team. Collective worship is facilitated every day either as a whole school, in Key stages, as a year group or as a class. Acts of worship will usually last for approximately 15 minutes, although it is recognized that this time will be shortened or lengthened when it is appropriate.

Principles and Practices for Assemblies

1. Good timing is essential. The entire assembly (unless it's a special event) should not exceed 20 minutes. This will include the reflective moment and the notices. The assembly time is usually 1000. The class teachers should lead their class into the hall as quietly and calmly as possible. Pupils are led into an experience of quietness to counterbalance the busy activity which generally marks the rest of the school day.
2. The focal point of the assembly can take the form of a focused silence, a reading, a piece of music, a picture or anything that informs further of the theme. Such quiet times will often lend themselves to the nurturing of a sense of awe and wonder, especially with regard to the natural world.
3. There should be no attempt at eliciting acts of assent or corporate public response. e.g. Amen. Responses are private, conditional and may be reflective in nature. It is important not to put pressure on the children to pray especially in a manner that would go against their own belief system.
 - There is time for general reflection and silent thought on the theme of the worship. When this occurs, in order to fulfil the law, it might be useful to say, "If it is your custom, you might like to offer a silent prayer to God about..." An invitation to Bow your head" is often used.
 - A prayer is said or read of a general nature, addressed to "lord" and finishing without any reference to a specific faith.
 - A prayer from a specific faith is said/read by an adherent of that faith, pupil or staff. This may be pre-fixed with an introduction, e.g. this is a prayer that is important to Christians / Hindus / Muslims; this is a prayer that Christians say at Christmas; this is a mantra that Hindus might hear in the temple; this is a prayer that Jews say at Passover, etc. Those present can listen and learn or make their prayer their own, as they wish.

4. High expectations of behaviour maintained throughout the assembly. Class teachers bring their class into the hall promptly and in an orderly fashion, having walked down the corridor quietly and calmly. It is the school's expectation that children will sit quietly and wait for the assembly to begin, listening to the music being played. This moment of quiet is important to set the tone for collective worship.

Visitors and visits

Visitors are welcome to contribute to collective worship at Oliver's Battery Primary School. However, it will be made clear to them the ages of the children and the guidelines for how they treat prayer. If possible, a copy of the collective worship policy will be sent out to them in advance. We have an established relationship with the local churches and have visits from a member of the clergy each half-term. They are kept informed of the theme and expectations for the assemblies they attend and contribute to.

As part of collective worship we will visit our local churches at Christmas and Easter time.

Right of Withdrawal

Parents/guardians have the legal right to withdraw their child from parts of or all collective worship. Pupils who are withdrawn are suitably occupied and supervised. Teachers can also exercise their right to withdraw from leading or attending acts of collective worship, but attending "assemblies" is part of a teacher's contractual duty. At Oliver's Battery we believe that our approach to collective worship is educationally sound and crucial to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development of our pupils. We take pleasure in the fact that all children attend and that it is a time when we can share important lessons as a whole school community.