

Alexandra Primary School



Acts of Collective Worship

Written by: J Norton
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A Policy for Collective Worship at School

Introduction

All maintained schools must provide daily collective worship for all registered pupils and promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development. The collective act of worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

Collective Worship is defined at school as a time when the whole school, or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, moral issues, traditions and customs and interests. It offers pupils an opportunity to come together and worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities to support the children's ongoing spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

At Alexandra Primary School, we apply for a Determination which allows us to have collective worship which reflects not only the Christian faith, but also the faiths and traditions of our wider school community. A Determination must be applied for via the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) that operates in Hounslow and renewed every five years.

Aims, Vision, Values and Ethos

At school, we believe that Collective Worship is an opportunity to reflect and consider a range of issues, feelings and questions. An opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate the wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds which are present in our school community, as well as those in the wider community identified in the agreed syllabus for Religious Education Local Authority 'Widening Horizons' guidance.

We believe that our approach to Collective Worship helps prepare children to:

- Aspire** to be successful learners who enjoy learning;
- Perform** as well as they can, make progress and achieve and become confident individuals who are able to live safe and fulfilling lives;
- Succeed** as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

We think it very important to develop a strong set of values and principles, and that children are able to question and understand what it means to grow up in British society. Through a rich, engaging and challenging curriculum, and through a focus on key events in British History we invite pupils to reflect upon their role in a diverse, multicultural and multi faith society.

Alexandra Primary School has identified through discussion with children, staff, parents and Governors, 12 values that support our School Aims and we feel that two British values in particular stand out as being key to develop with the school community:

- Respect**, treating others as you would like to be treated with **Compassion** as part of respect, focussing on what we have in common with each other and not differences.

We set British Values in the context of Respect for each other and our community, having compassion for all.

We aim to equip children with a mature, respectful and sensitive appreciation for difference and diversity. In discussing what it means to be British, children engage critically with stereotypes and prejudices and develop an understanding of how we can celebrate our heritage and home cultures whilst also embracing the ties that bind us together.

Collective Worship contributes to the school's caring ethos and we aim that it is a time when children can:

- Share common aims and values
- Celebrate achievement and special times
- Explore together the world in which we live
- Develop community spirit and a sense of shared responsibility

We intend that Collective Worship contributes to the development of the whole child by providing opportunities to:

- worship God
- reflect on that which is considered worthy
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- develop their own spirituality
- reflect on the direction of their lives
- reinforce positive attitudes and wellbeing
- participate and respond
- reflect on what it means to be human
- consider the wonders and worries of the world

Collective Act of Worship (CAW) at Alexandra Primary School

The Collective Act of Worship is distinct from curriculum time and takes place daily within an assembly as a Key Stage or within the classroom. It plays a part in establishing and promoting the ethos of our school. Pupils have the opportunity to reflect and to consider a range of issues, concerns and feelings. Collective Acts of Worship provides the following:

- Time and opportunity for reflective thought, contemplation and if appropriate, prayer; encouraging pupils to explore and review the variety of values, attitudes and standards associated with religions and society;
- Exploration of their own spirituality, beliefs and values;
- Foster a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values;
- Provide the opportunity to consider spiritual, moral and ethical issues in local, national and world contexts;
- Develop thoughtful and extended responses to key questions;
- Celebrate difference and diversity and respect for the beliefs of others;
- Illuminate, celebrate and commemorate what has meaning, value and purpose for individuals, the school and the wider community.
- Encourage pupils to reflect on dimensions of human life for example; the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, solemn...etc.

Collective Acts of Worship will at times feature 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.

We acknowledge that the collective act of worship can make a significant contribution to a child's spiritual, moral and spiritual development, wellbeing and it can provide the context for children to experience feelings such as awe, wonder, gratitude, appreciation, respect, elation and reverence and if appropriate prayer.

At Alexandra we recognise the need to consider the backgrounds that our children come from and it is therefore not our practice to preach to or convert the children. The faith backgrounds of staff, children and their families is respected at all times.

Pedagogy

A variety of teaching and learning styles are used in delivery of acts of collective worship. Leaders will choose the style / method and resources which are appropriate to the content, the age of children, ability and the background of the children.

Planning

Alexandra Primary School has a termly programme of themes and topics for assemblies and Collective Acts of Worship which link the school values which support our school aims and to the themes that children are learning where possible. We draw themes from issues of global importance, Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning and festivals / events of significance for different faiths. The act of collective worship takes place as part of whole school or phase assemblies or in class. Assemblies are led by senior staff, class teachers and class assemblies are led by the children. Sometimes invited guests will contribute.

We endeavour to provide an appropriate environment for acts of collective worship at school, in an appropriate space, at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner.

The acts of collective worship are planned to give pupils a variety of experiences to enable them to reflect on, and respond to, things, which our school community believe, are important. These experiences will include:

- The telling of appropriate stories using sacred and secular stories, and readings
- Drama / Dance
- Artefacts / natural materials
- Poetry
- Music / songs / reflection / meditation / reflection / prayer
- Mime
- Media clips, internet video clips and interactive white boards

Collective worship, whether in assembly or in class time, should:

- Respect the integrity and dignity of pupils and staff so that it is acceptable to the whole community, staff and pupils, and involve the pupils;
- Be appropriate to the needs and interests of the pupils;
- Be clearly distinguished from everyday activity of the school;

- Be inclusive so that everyone can both contribute to it and gain from it and participate in it if this is appropriate.

Organisation of Collective Worship 2019-2020

At Alexandra Primary School, we have organised the act of Collective Worship as follows:

Week day	Collective Act of Worship	Person Responsible	Focus
Monday 9:00 – 9:15	Junior School Assembly in Junior Hall	SLT member	Introduction of assembly theme Attendance and Punctuality Celebrating Achievement
	Class based for Infant classes.	Class teacher	Introduction of theme for the week
Tuesday	Class based	Class teacher	Weekly assembly theme
Wednesday 9:00 – 9:15	Infant School Assembly in Infant Hall	SLT member	Assembly theme Celebration of Good Work
Wednesday 10:10 – 10:30	Junior Singing in School in Junior Hall	RF / SLT	Singing Celebration of work Assembly theme
Thursday 10:00 – 10:30	Class based	Class teachers	Weekly assembly theme
Friday 9:00 – 9:30	Whole School in Hall/ Class Assembly in Hall	SLT / Class teachers	Assembly theme Celebration of achievement Attendance Stars of the week

Class based assemblies provide children with the opportunity to reflect on the themes raised in assemblies and on any issues that might occur.

The precise details of timings may vary from year group to year group. Generally, the whole-school assembly will be either led by a class, using the weekly focus as the basis for the assembly, or a year group or the whole-school as acknowledgement of a particular faith's festival of celebration. Parents / carers are also usually invited to attend class assemblies on a regular basis, giving them the opportunity to share celebrations, our values, children's achievements as this helps develop understanding of our school ethos.

The programme of the weekly focus applies to the acts of worship taking place in KS1 and Reception. Nursery will have a class-based experience of collective worship that will be in accordance with the appropriate guidance contained in the EYFS Curriculum; they will participate in the weekly whole school assemblies when appropriate. The length of collective acts of worship may vary according to the age of the children and or the particular experience, but generally they will be held within 15 minutes gathering for the year group and whole school settings.

The act of collective worship will comply with appropriate legal requirements (e.g.: containing reverence for a higher being, opportunity to experience awe and wonder etc.) and be sensitive to the diversity of religious and cultural beliefs and practices present in our multi-faith school, by using appropriate names and terms, and by use of inclusive language.

Expectations

- Staff leading assemblies will ensure that the hall is set up ready for the arrival of the children and or parents including playing music to create an appropriate atmosphere for listening and calm reflection.
- Children are expected to enter the hall quietly and sit and listen to any music respectfully whilst waiting for all the children to arrive in assembly
- All present are expected to engage in active listening during the assembly and participate where appropriate
- If a class is late to assembly, they should not enter and return to their classroom for a class assembly.
- Staff present should ensure children behave appropriately
- The collective act of worship may be identified in a range of ways including the lighting of a candle, the playing of music, a period of silence or reflection, singing, or the reading of a poem or prayer.
- Class teachers must ensure appropriate arrangements are made for pupils in their class who are withdrawn from collective worship.

Format of Assemblies

Music may be played at the beginning and ends of assemblies to encourage the pupils to listen and become calm and reflective. Assembly should enable children to:

- Feel respectful of one another;
- Listen, watch, observe, respond and reflect on stories, discussions, questions;
- Develop an appreciation of themselves, others and the world about us;
- Experience cultural influences and traditions;
- Be presented with ideas that are thought provoking;
- Develop vocabulary and ideas concerned with wider communities.

Resources

Resources to support the specific faith elements of collective worship will be kept centrally in certain designated areas, e.g. artefacts will be kept in artefact boxes, and books in the artefact boxes will be kept in the appropriate sections of the library. ICT provides opportunity to listen to prayers and find out about customs associated with different faiths.

Staff must be aware of the significance of artefacts and that they must be handled in a reverent way. The RE co-ordinator will advise on any particular actions that must be observed. Our children themselves have a wealth of experience to share. There are a number of assembly resources for loan from the Headteacher's / Deputy Headteacher's office.

Equal Opportunities

Assemblies and collective act of worship is available to all children attending our school at an appropriate level for the ages, ability and experience of the children. It will show diversity within each faith and be without imposition and allow for freedom of one's own beliefs. A variety of resources will be used to reflect the range and diversity from our community.

Withdrawal from Collective Acts of Worship

Parents have the right to withdraw their children wholly or partly from Collective Worship and are not obligated to provide reasons. The school is still responsible for those pupils who do not participate. When parents do not wish their children to participate in collective worship they are encouraged to arrange a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss the elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part; the practical implications of withdrawal; and whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and, if so, how much.

Teachers are required to attend assemblies as part of their conditions of service. However, they are not obliged to attend or participate in acts of worship. Any teacher wishing to withdraw from Collective Worship must discuss the matter with the Head Teacher.

Health and Safety

Health and safety must be considered whenever a large group of children and staff congregate in the hall. Safe and considered movement into and exiting the hall must be a priority. The use of candles and matches must also be considered to ensure their safe use.

Success Criteria

We will evaluate our practice and policy through the following:

- Involvement, engagement, attention and reaction of the children to the content of assemblies and collective acts of worship
- The growth of tolerance, respect and understanding within the school community as seen through monitoring processes
- A contribution to individual and community sense of wellbeing assessed through discussion, pupil voice, school council and other surveys.
- Review of enrichment experiences and responses to shared experiences
- Reaction of the children

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school. The school will seek to consult with Governors and parents every five years on renewal of the determination.

Monitoring occurs through informal and formal discussion with staff and feedback provided by parents and visitors. Revision to assembly themes, formats and acts of collective worship will be discussed in the summer term through team and SLT meetings for implementation in the new academic year.