

The Bellbird Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

March 2021

(To be reviewed Autumn 2024)

Introduction

This School Policy is provided to give teachers, governors, pupils and other outside agencies a clear and comprehensive guide on how Collective Worship is delivered at The Bellbird Primary School.

Aims

Through the act of Collective Worship we intend:

Aims concerning reflection

- To provide an opportunity for pupils to experience worship in which God (and, on occasion, another deity or key religious figure) is the focus
- To foster feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy
- To give memorable and enjoyable experiences
- To respond to the aesthetic – music, poetry, art, literature
- To explore a sense of the sacred
- To enable pupils to encounter the vocabulary of prayer

Aims concerning personal development

- To help pupils discover their place in the world
- To highlight and nurture spiritual development through experiencing worship
- To heighten awareness of ultimate questions and to provide the opportunity to reflect upon these
- To support the search for meaning
- To enable pupils to make effective use of silence in opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation and (where appropriate) prayer
- To enable pupils to experience ritual and the vocabulary of worship

Aims concerning community

- To reflect the School's nature as an inclusive community
- To develop personal relationships and to encourage social and moral development
- To provide an opportunity to empathise with the needs of others
- To provide an opportunity for pupils to become acquainted with people from the local and wider community, including the local churches / places of worship
- To encourage respect and care for the world by nurturing a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues
- To provide opportunity to acknowledge Christian festivals and the wide range of other religious festivals celebrated both in our local community and in the wider world.
- To enable pupils to appreciate their worth and value in the community
- To celebrate gifts, talents and achievements

Act of Worship

At The Bellbird Primary School we ensure that:

- a) Collective Worship is held daily.
- b) It occurs in different school groups and not necessarily for the whole school together.*

- c) It is “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”: a broadly Christian act of worship can include material from another faith.
- d) It is appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils.

The Act of Collective Worship

(see Appendix 1)

Collective worship will normally take place as part of an assembly. An assembly is a gathering of the School, or part of it, for any purpose, i.e. to share information or give instructions. Worship is the part of the assembly where the children are reflecting on something special, reverence for a divine being, power or personal God.

Acts of Collective Worship are carefully planned by the Headteacher and subject Co-ordinator. A general theme is planned for a term and then each week an element of this theme is explored. Christian and other festivals are built into the Collective Worship programme. When exploring festivals in Collective Worship, the meaning and significance of the festival are focused on, identified and then reflected on in a wider context. For example, in the celebration of Christmas, one of the underlying meanings is the giving of a gift. This theme can be explored within other religions through stories, practices etc.

Range of Activity

The Bellbird Primary School will ensure there is a balance of appropriate stories, readings, drama, music, prayer, audio visual aids and visitors.

Language used during Collective Worship

During Collective Worship we will all choose our words with care so we respect the integrity of the pupils taking part. For example, when we introduce a prayer we will invite the children to join in, i.e. ‘I am going to say a prayer which is a well-loved favourite for Christians. If you would like to join with me and agree, you can do so by saying ‘Amen’ at the end’. Another example would be the use of a phrase such as “Christians believe”, rather than “we believe”. We will also prefix some hymns that refer to God saying, ‘This is a Christian hymn’.

The language used during Collective Worship should be kept simple, so the children understand exactly what is meant by the words that are used. It is also important that as with any other educational experience the children are aware right from the beginning what the objective is for the specific act of Collective Worship.

Atmosphere

The children will enter the Hall for Collective Worship to music. The same piece will be repeated over a period of time.

Opportunities for silence are especially important in the context of Collective Worship. To learn how to be quiet and still is to acquire the ability to step back from situations, to reflect and think.

Groupings

During the week we have several different types of groupings. On Mondays the Headteacher will lead a whole school assembly. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays a Key Stage or class assembly will take place. On Thursday there is a whole school singing assembly and on Fridays we all come together for a sharing and celebration assembly to which parents are invited.*

Inclusion

We embrace and celebrate those of different faiths / religions as well as those within our school / wider community with no beliefs. We acknowledge the rights and individuality of all.

Visitors and Collective Worship

Clergy from our local churches are invited to lead times of Collective Worship on a regular basis. We also welcome a Christian Schools Assembly Team, called GENR8 to share an assembly with us each term. On occasion we welcome outside visitors / agencies, religious leaders from other communities to join with us and share their faith and interests as are appropriate to our school.*

Withdrawal from Collective Worship

If a parent of a pupil requests that he/she should be partly or wholly excused from attendance at religious worship in the School, the child will be excused until the request is withdrawn. Supervision for the child will be the School's responsibility.

Governors

The Governors of the Bellbird Primary School recognise that they have a shared statutory responsibility with the Headteacher to ensure provision of Collective Worship. Governors are welcome to come into School and take part in any aspect of Collective Worship.

** During the period of Covid 19 and the associated adjustments to school life (e.g. year group bubbles, partial school closure, limited movement around the school etc.) these aspects of the Collective Worship Policy will be suspended or enacted differently. This may include, for example, remote assemblies by senior leaders, assembly videos by external organisations such as GenR8 being viewed in class.*

Appendix 1

Preparing for an Act of Collective Worship

However carefully the ground has been prepared, it is still a challenge to deliver a well-thought-out act of worship. Following these seven basic rules will help to make the occasion a success.

1. Use the termly planner and suggestions given as a starting point.
2. Narrow the theme down to one idea or concept. This makes the planning of the assembly easier. For example, suppose that the theme is Christmas. There are a number of ideas included in the subject. One of them is that of a 'gift'.
3. Unpack the idea or concept. In this example, what is the concept of a gift and giving really about? What is the connection with Christianity and Christmas in particular? Christians believe that Jesus was a gift from God, sent with his love. For Christians, Jesus is the first and greatest Christmas present. The wise men came to visit the baby Jesus bringing gifts, each of which had a symbolic meaning that said something about the nature of who Jesus was. Christians believe that giving to others (especially those in need) is witnessing to what God has done for them.
4. Find an illustration of the idea from the pupils' world. In the case of Christmas, show them presents you have already wrapped. Talk about what presents mean. What is it like to receive gifts? What do the gifts tell you about the sender?
5. Move from the pupils' world to the Christian concept. One way of doing this is to find an illustrative purchase point within the religion. In the case of Christmas you could tell them the story of *Baboushka*, *Papa Panov* or the *Fourth Wise Man*.
6. Make the story relevant to people today. Using the story of *Papa Panov* or *The Fourth Wise Man*, you could relate the caring of and looking after those in need at Christmas as important to Christians believing that they are obeying the commands of Jesus. You could talk about a charity such as the *Crisis at Christmas* appeal.

Provide a short time for reflection: either use silence – for pupils to think about people in the news or of those nearer to home who need help this Christmas – or a poem, or a prayer.