



Statement on Collective Worship

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Spring 2023

The difference between try and triumph is UMPPHHH!

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Original date approved	Spring 2023
Current date approved	Click or tap to enter a date.
Date of next review	Spring 2024
Policy owner	S.Walker@skeltonprimaryschool.co.uk
Policy type	Non statutory

Document History:			
Version	Date of review	Author	Note of revisions
2	13/02/2023	Chris Clements	Template Change

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Introduction

At Skelton Primary School, we believe that Collective Worship provides a valuable focus for the school community and helps reflect the tone and ethos of the school.

Our families on the whole note that they are of non-religious backgrounds. Some of our families are Christian and a small number of children are from religions other than Christianity. We recognise that in asking our children to worship, we have to consider the background that they come from. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day (The Education Reform Act 1988.) These acts of worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character for the majority of the time. They must also be appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils.

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.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Head Teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from collective worship.

Aims

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 upon 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 supporting 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 other people in every-day 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
- Provide time for quiet reflection

Objectives

We see school worship as an educational opportunity to encourage pupils to:

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions and achievements together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes and standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life e.g. the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice and service to other people .

Planning and organisation

In our school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. Children assemble within their Key Stages three times a week and on the remaining two days, a week teachers give opportunities for worshipful time in the classroom.

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, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

The Head Teacher usually leads the whole school worship, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other occasions.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Secular and occasionally sacred stories/readings
- Role play
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

Music

We consider songs and music to be very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and believe that it unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of songs and music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. We select our songs and music carefully to match the theme.

There is a weekly singing practice. During this, we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to the song.

Prayer

We feel that our school prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introduction to our prayers which distance children, whilst giving the opportunity to participate if they so desire.

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

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship. We also attend our local church for Harvest Festival, Remembrance, Christingle Christmas Carols, Mothers' Day and Easter.

Success Criteria

At this school we evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being