

Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School Collective Worship

Aim

The aim of this document is to provide some background information on the requirement of schools to hold a daily act of collective worship and to examine how Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School makes arrangements to meet its requirements.

The Nature Of Worship

In the context of collective worship, “to worship” normally means *the affirmation of the ultimate worth of one or more deities*. In its broadest sense however, the act of worship can be described as the *giving of worth to values, ideas or other people* and it is this latter meaning that the collective act of worship at Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School is based upon.

Worship may have many forms. It might be loud, lively and vibrant or quiet, calm and peaceful. It may involve formal ritual or be largely a reflective process. It will sometimes involve music, dance, drama and story but may simply involve space to think, reflect and contemplate.

The Legal Basis

There are two Education Acts which have bearing on collective worship in schools.

The 1944 Education Acts states:

- ◆ There must be a *daily Act of Collective Worship* for all registered pupils, which in city schools must be non-denominational.
- ◆ Teachers in city and church controlled schools have the right to withdraw from collective worship.
- ◆ Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship.
- ◆ The requirements do not apply to nursery schools or classes.

The 1988 Education Acts states:

- ◆ There may be flexibility in the timing and organisation of a daily collective worship - any time and with a small group or whole school.
- ◆ That acts of worship may happen off the school premises but the act states that the act of collective worship must still be held for each child each school day.
- ◆ That Head Teachers have the power to decide how collective worship is organised, after consultation with the governing body. This should take account of the relevant circumstances and backgrounds of the pupils.
- ◆ If the Head Teacher considers that circumstances conflict with the arrangements for collective worship then an application to modify or lift the

order can be made to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

- ◆ Provision by the school for worship in separate faith communities is only permitted when such arrangements have been approved by the SACRE.

The Nature Of Collective Worship

For all city schools, the collective worship that must be organised by the school must be of a *wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*, with the main emphasis being on the *broad traditions of Christian belief*.

This does not mean that the act needs to contain only Christian material provided that as a whole it reflects the traditions of Christian belief. Not every act of worship that takes place needs to be of this Christian character as long as the majority over a term are.

The commitment to Christian belief is not assumed in either the person leading the act or those participating, moreover the worship should invite consideration of Christian belief and any reflection that takes place should be open and honest.

Forest Fields Primary School and Nursery

Forest Fields Primary is an inner-city school which has a diverse social and ethnic catchment area. The predominate religion of the children who attend the school is Muslim (approximately 56.7%). With other religions also represented within the school, Collective Worship has a unique flavour which, whilst still being broadly Christian in nature, has a multi faith approach.

Reflecting Christian Tradition

Many of the concerns of Christianity are similar to those of other religions and religious ideas and questions with which Christians wrestle are those with which many others wrestle too. Examples include:

- creation;
- death and resurrection;
- empowerment;
- faith;
- forgiveness;
- human selflessness;
- reconciliation;
- ultimate purpose.

There are also, of course, many values that are part of the broad traditions of Christian belief which are essential to a great many who are not Christian. Some are shared by the majority of people. Examples include:

- the ideals of loving and caring;
- the value of both the individual and the community;
- human stewardship of the natural world and its resources;
- a concern for social justice.
- respect

The Key Principles Of Our Collective Worship

- Assembly should be inclusive
- Assembly should be educational
- Assembly should contribute to the religious education of all pupils
- Assembly should have a sense of occasion
- Assembly should be shaped to the needs of our particular school

Creating the right atmosphere

Creating the right atmosphere for an Act of Worship is vital. The following are techniques which may help create the right atmosphere:

Music

Can be used to set the scene or atmosphere for helping pupils to reflect or be creative and imaginative.

Greetings and goodbyes

These give the assembly a definite start and finish.

A point of focus

This can be a number of things, e.g. a slide projected onto a black cloth, an artefact or a picture. An object of mystery which may capture pupils' imagination often works well.

Comfort

The response of pupils is likely to be more positive if they are comfortable. Key considerations are the seating arrangements, group size and whether the room is light and airy.

Forms Of Collective Worship At Forest Fields

At Forest Fields we try to ensure that the experiences that the children receive are diverse in nature. This continues in our Collective Worship where we aim to provide the children with rich and varied experiences which take the form of:

- small group assemblies lead by a single member of staff
- whole school assemblies lead by staff
- whole school achievement assemblies
- whole school celebrations of work undertaken by the children on themes (often relating to religious festivals)
- visiting speakers
- presentations by groups of children (music, dance and drama)

The Organisation Of Collective Worship At Forest Fields

Assemblies cover topical and moral issues as well as religious themes and include opportunities for the children to make personal responses at an individual level and this happens through contemplation and personal reflection.