



THE BISHOP OF HEREFORD'S BLUECOAT SCHOOL

The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School Worship Policy - September 2017

Introduction

We recognise that in asking our children to take part in collective worship, we need to consider the variety of faiths, cultural traditions and backgrounds of our students. The faith background (including those of no faith) of both the pupils and the staff is valued and respected at all times. It is our hope that all participants will derive benefit from the collective worship, which takes place within the School.

We agree with the view of SACRE that schools need to clearly differentiate between corporate worship and collective worship.

Corporate worship takes place within a faith community context e.g. in churches, gurdwaras, mosques, synagogues, temples and so on. Corporate worship implies a community with a shared set of beliefs and values. For most faith communities worship is concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. Few schools can expect that all their members will subscribe to a set of beliefs which enable the entire school community as such to constitute a worshipping community.

The term "collective" when used in relation to worship in our school refers to the gathering together of a group or groups of pupils and staff for worship; it does not in any way suggest an act of worship which involves a group of students and staff meeting to subscribe to any particular faith or denomination of a faith.

Principles

BHBS believes 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 on the development of the whole child, spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually, is reflected in our collective worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives students to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways and in any other appropriate manner.

The right of withdrawal.

Parents' have a legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship. If there are any students whose parents exercise their right to withdraw them from worship, alternative activities will be provided in consultation with the student's parents. This does not mean that the students will be in any way exempt from the Christian ethos of the school, which underpins the whole of school life.

Aims and Objectives

At BHBS we always seek to reflect in our worship the Christian foundation of the school and its care for all who work here. Students are helped to understand the meaning of Christian worship and we hope that believers will be able to share in it and that others of no faith will begin to sense the love of Jesus.

Our central aims of collective worship are to:

- enable students and staff to explore and celebrate the differences and diversity found in the variety of forms of worship in the Anglican Christian tradition.
- lead the school community to the 'threshold of worship' in order for them to make an informed choice about their own involvement and to consider their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- seek to deepen and widen the experience of those of 'faith' and encourage those of 'no faith' so that they begin to feel for themselves something of what it means to worship.
- use celebration, silence, reflection, contemplation, meditation, prayer, song, symbols and imagery as vehicles for worship and spiritual growth.
- provide opportunities for the whole school community to address God directly through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit through acknowledging his presence, reflecting upon his character and giving Him praise and honour.
- use a vocabulary of worship that encourages the whole school community to attend, participate and lead worship.
- encourage all present to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework by learning more about the Christian faith and by encountering Christ through worship.
- raise awareness through reflection of the ultimate questions of life relating to matters of faith.
- reaffirm, strengthen and practise key Christian values. (e.g. love, peace, compassion, forgiveness, self giving) and celebrate each unique individual member of the school community as made in the image of God.
- nurture and encourage respect and care for God's created world by promoting a positive attitude to environmental issues locally, nationally and globally.
- seek to provide opportunities for spiritual, social and moral development that is characterised by feelings such as awe, wonder, being uplifted, elation, appreciation, gratitude, respect, and reverence.
- develop a sense of community within the school, the locality, and foster the sense of being part of a wider community through the celebration of achievements, festivals and special occasions.
- foster a concern for the needs of others.

In summary within our daily act of collective worship, we aim to provide opportunities for students to:

- provide an opportunity for students to worship God;
- celebrate all that is good and beautiful and express thankfulness for the joy of being alive;
- provide opportunities for students to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the darker side of life;
- ensure that the experiences provided are relevant to the age, aptitude and family background of the students;
- give time for silent reflection and exploration of inner space;

A vibrant Christian learning community

- illustrate forms of worship that others have found helpful in their spiritual development, e.g. silent contemplation, dance, singing;
- provide a rich variety of forms of expression, e.g. art, drama, music, story and give students the opportunity to experience these at their own level rather than teachers imposing their own interpretations;
- take place in an environment that is conducive to worship, which is professionally coordinated and properly resourced;
- always invite, never coerce, remembering that students will be at different stages of spiritual development and that they should feel able to respond and participate at their own level. (National Society Web site, 2007)

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Monitoring and evaluation are part of a whole school cycle of self review and this will be achieved over time by asking all stakeholders to reflect on school worship.

Monitoring

Monitoring of collective worship will be carried out jointly by the Headteacher, Heads of House and the Assistant Headteacher responsible for worship. Useful strategies for collecting the evidence will include:

- written observations; checking that practice matches planning
- observing students' attentiveness and level of interest
- conducting formal observations of collective worship and providing feedback
- seeking feedback from students, staff, parents, governors, incumbent and visitors
- observing the extent of the collective worship's influence on students' attitudes and behaviour throughout the school
- holding regular discussions with colleagues
- Feedback will be brought to House meetings which will review collective worship.

Evaluation

The information gathered via one or more of the strategies listed above will be analysed carefully in order to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the collective worship. The Headteacher, Heads of House, Assistant Headteacher and foundation governor(s) will be the main evaluators.

Formal evaluation of collective worship will take place at least annually.

Review

The Headteacher, governors and staff will review this policy every *three* years.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

A daily act of collective worship is held for all students regardless of their background of culture or religion. Every effort is made by the school to involve all students unless withdrawn by their parents in accordance with the law.

Responsibilities

It is the ultimate responsibility of the Headteacher and governing body of a school to ensure a daily act of collective worship takes place. At *BHBS* the responsibility to co-ordinate the acts of worship is delegated to the Assistant Headteacher responsible. She/he provides themes, monitors the form tutor worship, invites and liaises with visiting speakers and keeps a record of the content of each act of collective worship. Monitoring and evaluation is the responsibility of the Heads of House, Headteacher and designated Assistant Headteacher.

Conclusion

At *BHBS*, collective worship is highly valued and every effort is made to ensure that all students and staff take an active part in a high quality daily act of collective worship. Worship may contain many elements but at *BHBS* we seek to specifically ensure that the act of collective worship is a learning experience as well as a spiritual encounter;

Signature and date:

Policy last reviewed: September 2017

Next review date: September 2020

Worship Co-ordinator: Jonathon Nicholas

Governor responsible for collective worship: TBC