



DAYSPRING TRUST

Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed May 2016

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Collective Worship Policy Outline

The Dayspring Trust aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. We believe that our Christian values spring from the two great commandments, 'Love God and love your neighbour'. We seek to live this out through the power of the Holy Spirit. St Paul reminds us in Galatians 5.22-23 that the fruits of the Spirit are "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control". These are also underpinned by the Old Testament injunction to "Do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God" Micah 6.8. These values rooted in the Christian Faith come as a package and we aim to embed them in the life of our academies in a worked out way. We recognise that at times we may focus on particular values to bring them into greater prominence within our academies. We believe these values to be in accordance with British values springing from our Judeo-Christian roots. Collective worship will play a major and vital part in assisting with this process of embedding these values in the life of our academies.

The Multi Academy Trust members and Directors are aware of their responsibilities in law and are committed to the provision of excellent RE and high quality Christian worship within its academies in accordance with our Anglican foundation. This is embraced in our Dayspring Trust vision statement:

- **Forge a supportive and challenging family of academies**
- **Provide excellent education within a strong Christian community**
- **Resource our pupils for wise and generous living**

In addition, each academy also has its own distinctive mission statement, underpinned by the vision statement of the Dayspring Trust.

At Ian Ramsey CE Academy:

"Together to learn, to grow, to serve."

This is embodied in scripture 1. Peter 4.10

'Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in various forms.'

At Venerable Bede CE Academy

"To create a stimulating, secure and caring environment within which all members of our community will realise their potential in the light of the Christian Gospel."

This is embodied in our academy motto: "Soar to the Height Together".

The RE syllabus is constructed by our own specialist staff and is, in its principles, in accordance with our trust deed. As a Multi Academy Trust we are partners in the Sunderland and Stockton SACRE group. All learners have a full programme of RE leading to a half GCSE as a core subject. A copy of the current Syllabus, which will be under continuing review and development, is available on request. RE and Collective Worship play a key role in developing the ethos of the academy with an enquiring, open and inclusive spirituality.

All young people experience a daily act of Worship either in tutorial time, as a year group or as a key stage group. School Eucharists are held regularly with each pupil attending at least one per term. Other services are offered throughout the year.

However, our main concern is with the quality rather than the quantity of acts of worship. To assist with the delivery of collective worship We are developing models of Associate Chaplaincy in our academies with our local clergy and will do all we can to secure this provision. We welcome support from the Diocese of Durham in this.

The Existing Legal Framework

(Religious Education and Collective Worship Circular 1/94 ERA 1988)

Formal acts of Collective Worship are required by the Education Reform Act (1988) and seek to provide spiritual, moral, cultural and social dimensions to the day.

Circular 1/94 Section 50

Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.

Circular 1/94 Sections 57-59 reflecting the Education Reform Act 1988 s.6(1)

'Worship' is not defined in the legislation and in the absence of any such definition it should be taken to have its natural and ordinary meaning. That is, it must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. However, worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'.

Collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. Although they may take place as part of the same gathering, the difference between the two should be clear. Collective worship can, nevertheless, be related to the day to day life, aspirations and concerns of the school.

'Taking part' in collective worship implies more than simply passive attendance. It follows that an act of collective worship should be capable of eliciting a response from pupils, even though on a particular occasion some of the pupils may not feel able actively to identify with the act of worship.

The 1988 Education Act confirms a parent's right to withdraw their child from collective worship if they wish. In this case the school remains responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn from collective worship. It is hoped that parents will discuss this with the Head of School, including any request for alternative provision. (Cf Religious Educative and Collective Worship Circular 1/94 S.83-88)

AIMS OF THE DAYSPRING TRUST'S COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

For the school community, worship is the opportunity for pupils and staff to come together to make a communal start to the day. It allows members of each academy to have a sense of belonging and to promote a common Christian ethos and shared values.

During collective worship our aim is to provide all young people with the opportunity to: -

- **Consider spiritual and moral issues.**
- **Explore their own beliefs.**
- **Develop their own spirituality**
- **Reflect upon their own human frailty especially when they make mistakes**
- **Explore the nature of forgiveness and second chances**
- **Develop a community spirit.**
- **Reinforce positive attitudes.**
- **Participate and respond.**

On the nature of our worship

Within our academies, worship will be Christian in character reflecting the broad traditions of the Church of England. With particular emphasis on developing knowledge and understanding of the Christian Faith lived out in practice within the understanding of the Anglican tradition.

A very simple definition of worship can be "paying attention to God" and includes thanksgiving and praise and engaging with the spiritual dimension to life.

As our worship is Christian in character, it will have an emphasis on the following beliefs, which we hold as Anglicans in common with all other Christians:

- 1) In God the creator and source of all life

- 2) That Jesus of Nazareth had, and has, a central significance in disclosing the nature of God
- 3) That God is active in the world, and in the lives of people
- 4) That people will find true wholeness through a relationship with God
- 5) That the nature or primary quality of God is love
- 6) That all relationships between human beings should be guided by love
- 7) That human fulfilment comes through sacrificial self-giving and not through self-assertion or self-gratification
- 8) That people have a responsibility for their actions before God, and to our neighbours within the school community and broader society both in dealings with others, and in their use of the gifts of creation
- 9) That the Bible has a central place in the recounting of the story of the relationship between God and humanity

Although any single act of worship might only contain some of the above elements, over the course of each term, the majority of them will have been present. In summary, through collective worship, **we are seeking to:**

- 1) Present young people with the beliefs of the Christian faith in a suitable and appropriate manner.
- 2) Relate those beliefs to the pupils' experiences of life
- 3) Explore and celebrate Christian values which can help to shape virtue and character
- 4) Provide sufficient stimulus for reflection
- 5) Provide an opportunity for a response to take place

But not to:

- 1) Compel young people to worship
- 2) Convert them to Christianity
- 3) Assume belief

The Spiritual Dimension

The “Spiritual” is a proper concern for all education; it is mentioned in the 1944 Education Act, the 1988 Education Reform Act and in the DfE’s documents on the secondary curriculum. Education is an activity which seeks to develop the whole person, body, mind and spirit; that there is a spiritual dimension to life is one that we seek to take in to account.

Worship is then “that activity which sets the individual in the context of the spiritual”. Though the nature of the response will be different for everyone, our worship is concerned with offering everyone the opportunity to explore the spiritual and that something beyond through:

- Reflection on the natural world on such ideas as transience and change, pattern and order
- Experiences of, or the opportunity to reflect on awe, wonder and the transcendent
- Opportunities for expressing sorrow for loss and failure
- Opportunities for expressing joyful celebrations
- Encouragement of a search for truth and meaning
- Exploring the mystery of life – why does anything exist at all
- Exploring the idea that life can be complicated and choices difficult
- Examination of the dark side of life – pain, suffering, decay and loss

Such activities will have their starting points within our Christian story expressed in the Bible and in the general experiences of life, or more importantly the personal experiences of those present at the act of worship. During worship, we are seeking to develop the young persons’ abilities in the following:

- To be still
- To reflect on their experiences of life
- To explore their own inner life
- To be aware of their uniqueness and worth
- To be aware of others as thinking, feeling persons
- To have an imaginative approach to the world

- To be aware of the possibility of there being “something more” to life
- To reflect on where they find meaning in life

All of the foregoing activities and aims are part of Christian worship. These activities are concerned with reflection on meaning, purpose, mystery and wonder, providing opportunities for spiritual growth.

The Celebration of Values

Through acts of worship we seek to:

- 1) Explore ideas of community
- 2) Celebrate the academy’s aims
- 3) Foster concern and empathy with others
- 4) Point pupils to the world as it might be
- 5) Explore ideas of good and evil
- 6) Explore and permit expressions of emotion
- 7) Promote the Dayspring Trust and each academy and celebrate and reinforce our shared values

These themes and aims are an integral part of our Christian worship. During worship, there must be the opportunity for reflection and response on the part of the pupil. Within this, must be the possibility for private prayer and at times public prayer too.

Worship from other Christian traditions and other World Faiths

Young people will be given the opportunity to explore aspects of faith drawn from other non-Anglican Christian traditions. They will also have the opportunity to explore elements of beliefs from other World Faiths. This may include taking note of key festivals such as: The Chinese New Year, Hanukkah, Passover, Purim, Divali or Eid. Material from other faiths may also be incorporated in to Christian worship, for example: Harvest, One World Week, Prayers for World Peace; or in those themes and values which are common ground to all.

Worship as Education

As a Trust we seek to educate our learners in all aspects of human experience, and as worship and an awareness of the transcendent are a part of the experience of the majority of humanity, it is appropriate that pupils gain an understanding of what worship is, and have an opportunity to gain some insight into the spiritual dimension of life. Worship can only be experienced through participation, though it is important to state that participation does not imply commitment, and the level of pupils’ commitment to worship is a matter for them. The academy will present young people with the opportunity to experience and participate in worship each day. Worship becomes a vehicle for education when:

- Within the context of worship pupils have the opportunity to experience the emotions and feelings which are associated with worship. They may be brought to the “threshold of worship”, so that those who wish and are able can cross the threshold and worship in their own hearts and minds
- It celebrates the themes and topics arising from classroom work
- It offers a stimulus for classroom work
- It values the creative work produced by pupils
- It involves learners in dance, drama, music, speaking, reading, singing and role play
- It gives young people experience in leadership roles, both in leading and in planning worship

Worship fosters the development of the whole person by

- Stimulating concern for the needs of others
- Challenging learners to reflect on their own beliefs and values
- Challenging learners to understand alternative viewpoints, cultures and beliefs
- Developing a sense of worth and self-assurance in young people
- Making use of their skills

The Building of the School Community

In our academies, worship helps us to build a sense of community and feelings of belonging. Worship can provide the opportunity for any of the following to take place:

- 1) Showing interest in, and concern for, members of the school community
- 2) Celebrating special occasions together
- 3) Showing concern for the daily happenings in academy life, the local community and the wider world
- 4) Sharing an appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the academy
- 5) Exploring and reviewing the variety of values, attitudes and standards manifested in school or society

- 6) Giving expression to those common values which underpin the school community

Worship provides endless opportunities for the involvement of the wider community in the life of the academy. Directors, Academy Council members, our local clergy, parents or individuals in the community all have expertise or insights to offer, as part of the rich tapestry of themes and subjects that make up each academy's worship programme.

Dayspring Trust Aims

- 1) To ensure that our Christian foundation is expressed in our shared values and made real in our daily living
- 2) To establish the academies as centres of learning dedicated to quality and excellence.
- 3) To produce confident, well-adjusted members of the community, with a clear sense of right and wrong and an ability live wisely and generously
- 4) To ensure that each individual in the academy community is happy and cared for effectively
- 5) To promote a variety of teaching and learning methods where tradition and innovation are interwoven and supported by the latest technologies
- 6) To help pupils develop the spiritual, emotional, imaginative, intellectual and physical aspects of their lives
- 7) To work in partnership with Directors, Academy Council members, parents, the Diocese, Deanery and churches, other faith communities, local industry and commerce and local communities.
- 8) To help pupils to value themselves and their achievements
- 9) To facilitate the professional development of staff to meet the ever changing needs of the academy
- 10) To encourage members of the school community to respect their own and others' cultures and beliefs
- 11) To build effective links with the parishes in our area and within the Deaneries

