



Kingsway Junior School

'Developing Confident, Enthusiastic and Happy Learners!'

Collective Worship Policy

Based on the Hertfordshire Model for Schools

Responsible committee	Governing Body
Date Reviewed	Summer 2024
Next Review	Summer 2026
Signed on behalf of the Governing Body	<i>N Santamaria</i>
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Dignity Statement

Kingsway Junior School is committed to providing a learning environment where all children are treated with dignity and respect. As stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children are born with dignity, which cannot be taken away, regardless of behaviour, ability, disability, race, economic background, gender, sexuality or beliefs. Duty Bearers' protection of children's rights affords them this dignity and enables them to access education free from barriers.

The collective worship policy at Kingsway School pays due regard to statutory requirements. Collective worship is a valued and valuable part of school life and is taken seriously, because it shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school.

Statutory requirements

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. 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.

Collective worship- definition

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring “collective” not “corporate” worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit. Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive. Collective worship is unique and different. It gives us the opportunity to do just that - to collect together, to meet together. It is a collection of differences – different faiths, different cultures, different ages and different backgrounds. It is a focal point of the day in any school community where all ages can/might meet one another, share together and establish a shared sense of identity.

Worship of a broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character”, and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer. Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

Values and aims

We believe at Kingsway Junior School 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 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 everyday situations and beliefs
- the importance of atmosphere
- the respect of pupil and teacher integrity
- 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

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

Objectives

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

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

Planning and organisation

Creating an appropriate atmosphere in the space to be used for worship is important. This might be in the classroom with a single class or a larger space with more children representing a wider diversity. Sometimes when the whole school is assembled, staff use this as an opportunity for things other than worship – which of course means this is not ‘whole school’ worship. Whether in classroom or school hall the transition between other aspects of the day and the act of worship needs to be facilitated. The content of all acts of collective worship is considered carefully to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils, as well as the balance between Christianity and other faiths. At Kingsway we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. The whole school meets together on a Monday PM and Friday AM. On Tuesday and Thursday children meet in classes for this worship/reflection. Every week we have a singing and reflection session led by a member of staff.

The SLT usually leads the whole school worship, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership and we have pupil leadership teams who work with staff on a number of areas and come up with many ideas around assembly ideas. The assemblies are divided into themes which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. The Deputy Head is in charge of setting the assembly themes and then staff leading these worship sessions can plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up.

- ***Song/music***

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise with the songs we sing.

Every week we have a 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 that song.

- ***Prayer***

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that 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 introductions to our prayers which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g. ‘And now in a moment of reflection, stillness, listen to the words.’ At Kingsway, we encourage children to ‘hope, wish, pray or think.’ It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish. The range of resources is enormous but it’s

worth remembering that possibly the best resource is the children themselves when they freely write/offer their prayers in their own words.

- **Visitors**

Visitors provide information on causes and organisations, personal testimony and interview opportunities. They can be an enriching source of ideas. We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values.

- **Stillness and silence**

In collective worship silence and stillness create powerful moments for thinking and listening. The gift of silence is a gift that can be learnt and practised in any school and collective worship. It is best learnt when it is not the predictable pattern of every assembly but skillfully used with symbols such as light or water or candle flames and a guided intention of how to use the time of stillness.

- **Celebrations and remembrances**

Collective worship provides opportunities to celebrate the key festivals that are part of the cyclical yearly pattern of worship. Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Eid, Divali or Passover – celebrations are all important, and so much of living faith is about celebration and fun. Collective worship must represent the fun as well as the stillness and reflection.

Curriculum

Collective Worship and the Curriculum Collective worship time is distinct from curriculum time given to any subject including religious education. However, in Kingsway Junior School, we aim to enable collective worship and aspects of children's classroom learning to be mutually supportive. Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in line with school policy. To achieve this it addresses a wide variety of themes and topics, uses diverse stimuli and resources and provides pupils with opportunities to 'respond' at their own level.

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.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence

- Visitors

Success criteria

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
- A sense of occasion
- Good order
- Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body every two years.