



# WESTWOOD ACADEMY

## Assembly and Collective Worship Policy

Approved by the Governing Body on

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## ASSEMBLY AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

At Westwood Academy, through our school aims, ethos and curriculum, we aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

Collective worship makes a distinctive contribution to our school curriculum by developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion, religious beliefs, practices, language and traditions and their influence on individuals, communities, societies and cultures. It enables pupils to consider and respond to a range of important questions related to their own spiritual development, the development of values and attitudes and fundamental questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life.

### Shared Aims for Assembly and Collective Worship

1. To provide the opportunity for pupils to consider spiritual and moral issues.
2. To provide the opportunity for pupils to explore their own beliefs.
3. To develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes.
4. To celebrate achievements and special occasions in respect to pupils and school.
5. To introduce children to difference and diversity.
6. To encourage the children to reflect on aspects of school life.
7. To remind children of expectations with regard to behaviour and conduct.

These aims reinforce and support the aims of the school, especially:

- to develop sense of community;
- to learn to value each other;
- to recognise responsibility towards each other;
- to celebrate special achievements;
- to engender a caring moral awareness and a positive self-image;
- to develop thinking skills.

Assembly and collective worship should initiate ideas and feelings which are then followed up in the classroom environment (when appropriate/possible). At other times, themes will reinforce and extend social, moral and cultural attitudes and values.

### Distinct Aims for Collective Worship

1. To provide the opportunities for pupils to worship God or a supreme being.
2. To provide something special and separate from ordinary school activities.
3. In the majority of acts of collective worship, to reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief.



4. Endeavour to provide collective worship appropriate for all pupils and teachers.
5. To give pupils the opportunity to develop a worshipful attitude characterised by feelings such as awe, wonder, appreciation, gratitude and respect.
6. Begin to develop skills appropriate for worship including the capacity to be silent, still, thoughtful, reflective and contemplative.
7. To create an atmosphere conducive to silent contemplation and, if appropriate, prayer.

Assembly may be linked to RE but it may also be linked to any other subject or to any aspect of school life. At Westwood Academy, collective worship provides our pupils with a daily opportunity to worship God. We aim (as in DfE circular 1/94) that our collective worship reflects something special or separate from ordinary school activities.

### **The Relationship between Religious Education and Assembly**

Our assemblies and collective worship are not normally included in lesson time. However, there may be cases where, what commences as assembly (or indeed collective worship) progresses to lesson time without an obvious divide. *(See Appendix 1, extract from DfE dated 31.8.94.)*

### **Equal Opportunities and Special Needs**

As in all school activities, our assemblies and collective worship seek to ensure equal opportunities regardless of race, gender, religious affiliation and other abilities (unless parents request otherwise). *(See our school Equal Opportunities Policy for further details.)*

When taking assembly, teachers are aware of children's individual special needs and delivery is adapted accordingly.

Hymns and prayers are regularly used in collective worship. We use a variety of mainly Christian hymns and choruses. We endeavour to make collective worship appropriate for all children. Children are encouraged to participate as fully as possible whilst being given the opportunity to make their own choices.

### **Planning and Recording**

Assemblies are planned on a termly basis by the RE Co-ordinator in consultation with the staff and Headteacher. Themes are chosen and a variety of moral, Christian and multi-faith stories and poems are collated for staff to make a choice from.

A possible message is indicated for staff to develop but staff have the choice to develop the theme as they wish.

Any one of a variety of approaches may be adopted to start the collective worship section of the assembly, for example:-



- light a candle;
- play some music;
- ask children to close their eyes;
- talk them through an imaginary activity.

A record of what has been covered in assembly and collective worship will be kept for the Monday and Tuesday assemblies each week. For the remainder of the week, a set pattern is followed in assembly and collective worship.

## Organisation and Delivery

At Westwood Academy, assembly is a special time when pupils gather together for a variety of purposes:

- listening to stories and poems (religious and non-religious);
- watching a performance featuring drama, movement, dance or music;
- listening to teachers' accounts of personal experiences;
- listening to a visiting speaker;
- looking at artefacts from Christianity and other religions;
- sharing children's experiences and achievements;
- looking at and discussing posters, photographs, etc.

Children are praised for thoughtful contributions, behaviour, achievements, etc., in line with our policy.

## Weekly Organisation

*Monday:* Whole school - all teachers except those on duty

*Tuesday:* Whole school - individual staff assembly - all teachers except those on duty

*Wednesday:* Key Stages - birthday assembly - all staff

*Thursday:* Class Assembly - hymn practice - senior staff, pianist, two members of staff on rota basis

*Friday:* Whole school - sharing assembly - all teachers except those on duty

## Liaison

### Parents

Parents are always invited to our Birthday and special celebration assemblies. In addition, any parents voicing concerns are welcome to attend assemblies to give them insight. Children are encouraged to bring artefacts, special items and experiences from home, to share in assembly.

### Governors

Our RE Governor also has responsibility for collective worship and monitors aspects of the subjects and meets with the Co-ordinator. All Governors are invited to our special celebrations and acts of worship. Relevant aspects and changes are discussed at Pupil-related Committee meetings.



## Feeder Schools

Occasionally our feeder Pre-schools or Junior Schools are invited to special assemblies and celebrations.

## Staff Development

As part of an ongoing process, the RE Co-ordinator, School Development Manager, Headteacher and senior staff, etc, determine the needs of colleagues and attempt to address these in the planning of curriculum and staff development. Where appropriate, staff attend training sessions provided internally or externally by EAIS or other agencies, including the local BATIC group. Sometimes, in-school training is led by the RE Co-ordinator or other appropriate staff members. Support staff, e.g. special needs assistants, teaching assistants, etc, also attend teacher training sessions or have separate training.

## Development/Action Planning

The RE Co-ordinator, in association with the Headteacher/senior staff, will review/audit RE within the school. In the light of findings, action plans or development plans are drawn up (annually) and these are reviewed during the year. In addition a budget is allocated to RE based on the level of need.

**Legal Requirements** are being implemented at Westwood Academy. All registered pupils attend the act of collective worship each school day. On the rare occasions a class could not attend, the Classteacher will ensure the collective worship is classroom-based.

Parental right to withdraw children is observed.

Most acts of worship (51%) will be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".

In order to take account of pupils' age, aptitude and family backgrounds, Christian values will be of greater importance than distinct Christian beliefs.

*Values* tolerance; sharing; kindness; valuing others; love; saying sorry

*Distinct beliefs* creation; incarnation; Trinity; Kingdom of God

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **The Relationship between Religious Education and Assembly**

Annex A of DfE Circular 7/90 makes it clear that assembly - along with collective worship - is not to be included as lesson time, defined elsewhere in the Circular as "time during which pupils are being formally taught" (see para 27).

However, a letter from the DfE dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 1994 acknowledges that in certain circumstances, assembly can be used to deliver some of the content prescribed in this agreed syllabus. Assembly can therefore sometimes be included as lesson time. The relevant extracts from the letter are as follows:

*"Collective worship and assembly are, as you say, normally excluded from lesson time.*

*This is because lesson time is intended to relate to time during which pupils are formally taught; whereas collective worship is primarily a religious activity; and the school assembly is normally concerned with administrative activities.*

*"There may, nevertheless, be cases - particularly in smaller primary schools - where what commences as assembly (or indeed collective worship) progresses to lesson time, without an obvious divide. For example, the school assembly or act of collective worship might include a singing lesson, or - as you suggest - a lesson in RE.*

*"Whether or not the element of teaching involved in such cases is significant enough for those parts of the activity to count towards lesson time is, in our view, best left to the judgement of the individual Headteacher. It is not possible to prescribe centrally where the dividing line should lie, it will depend both on the content of the activity and on the method of delivery (in short, on how closely the activity, when included as part of the assembly or the act of collective worship, resembles the formal lesson which it is intended to represent)."*

This letter makes it clear that, providing certain conditions are met, part of the content prescribed in the programmes of study for RE at Key Stages 1 and 2 can be covered through assembly.

