



THE HERMITAGE SCHOOLS

Inspire, Learn, Achieve

Collective Worship Policy

This document sets out the Collective Worship provision at The Hermitage Schools.

Person responsible:	RE Leader
Date adopted:	Autumn 2024
Date of last review:	Autumn 2026
Date of next review:	Autumn 2028

Collective worship allows children to develop the experience of the elements involved in worship, such as praise, thanksgiving, prayer, reading from sacred books and personal reflection. It also develops for our children the idea of God as a divine being. Collective worship provides an excellent opportunity for children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development to take place.

The school strives to live out the Values which it delivers. This encompasses all interactions in school, between pupils and staff, amongst staff and amongst pupils. We aim for our Values to show through everything that is said and done in school. Each year, the school focuses on a half termly Value which is explored via assemblies, class reflection and PSHE lessons.

Legal Requirements

Schools are legally required to make provision for pupils of statutory school age to take part in a daily act of collective worship which is 'mainly of broadly Christian character'. The Education Reform Act of 1988 sets out guidelines on Collective Worship in maintained schools which can be briefly summarized as follows:-

- All pupils shall on each day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
- It can be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts of worship for different age groups or in different school groups.
- It can take place at any time of the school day.
- The worship shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.
- It should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.
- There must be regard for the age and aptitude of the pupils as well as their family backgrounds.
- Overall responsibility for the arrangements lies with the Headteacher in consultation with the governing body. (This does not mean that the Headteacher has to lead the worship, but to ensure that it takes place.)
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from taking part by writing to the Headteacher.

The Hermitage Schools meet the legal requirements by holding daily assemblies which contain a period of reflection, an act of collective worship. Assemblies are an important part of the curriculum; they foster a sense of community and are a time to share common interests and reinforce values. This is of special importance in our multi-cultural and multi-faith school and assemblies reflect this. Assembly also provides a quiet time when pupils come together in an atmosphere planned to allow for reflection and encourage spiritual awareness.

Aims:-

- To introduce children to a variety of forms of worship
- To help children experience feelings of awe, wonder, elation, appreciation and thanks
- To develop a sense of community
- To contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of each child
- To support the social and emotional development of pupils through making use of the SCARF Coram programme
- To broaden children's awareness of themselves, others and the world
- To promote a common ethos and understanding of shared Values and to reinforce positive attitudes
- To provide opportunities for quiet reflection
- To learn about religious festivals and traditions

During certain assemblies we would also seek to celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the school and the wider community.

Assemblies should have clear objectives and are planned to give a variety of starting points for reflection, discussion or learning and to provide opportunities for worship. We currently have a strong 'values' focus in our assemblies which changes half termly (including British Values). In order to deliver assemblies in a more thought provoking way, we have a variety of strategies and different styles of assemblies during the week. Please see the table below for more details:-

Weekly Programme

Day	KS2	KS1
Monday	School Values assembly - Headteacher	School Values assembly - Headteacher
Tuesday	In class Assembly / Presentation to school	School Singing
Wednesday	Class Reflection Time / Picture News	Class Assembly / presentation to school
Thursday	School Singing / Open The Book	In class Reflection Time /Picture News
Friday	School Celebration Assembly	School Celebration Assembly

NB:- Foundation Stage begin to join with KS1 and Whole School Assemblies from Spring Term

Themes

Monday assemblies and Class Reflection Times usually follow our value theme for each half term. The value changes on the first day of the half term.

Positivity, Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Integrity, Cooperation.

Visitors

We regularly invite members of the community to lead our assemblies. They usually use our values theme as a focus, but may also talk to us about particular events, themes or charities. We also have regular assemblies hosted by St Johns Church 'Open The Book', and assemblies to observe from Woking School Christian Assembly Team 'ENGAGE'.

CRT

Class reflection times are undertaken by the class teacher. The focus is chosen by Picture News with content being sent through weekly, covering world news, current affairs and link each week to Fundamental British Values. Sometimes SCARF materials are used - making links with our values and work covered in PSHE. It is expected that children will have an opportunity to debate and share own feelings and thoughts, have a quiet reflection/prayer time within this class-based assembly. For further guidance, please see the guidelines and appendix below.

Singing

Children are given opportunity to sing hymns and songs – these should support the religious and thematic content of assemblies. In addition to the singing assemblies, songs can be sung as part of a class assembly or at the discretion of the staff member taking the assembly.

Celebration Assemblies

These assemblies are an opportunity to celebrate success with the children. Each week, every class teacher selects children to receive the awards. Certificates are also stored in the staffroom, they are to be filled out by the class teacher and left in the box file ready for the assembly. The end of each half term a child is selected – or voted on by their peers in class to receive the Values award.

Class Assemblies

Class assemblies are prepared by class teachers, dates are chosen at the beginning of the year. All classes take one assembly per year. Parents are invited to class assemblies, and they are also performed in front of the school. For further details, please see the guidelines and appendix below.

Resources

A projector and computer are available in the hall if required for power point presentations, etc. A piano and sound system are available for music.

Music

Music should be used for children to come in and sometimes to lead out.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSEMBLY: THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Assemblies should be INCLUSIVE

- Assemblies should be pupil-centred, related to pupils' own experience and relevant to pupils concerns.
- Assemblies should acknowledge diversity and affirm each pupil's (and teacher's) own life-stance, whether it be religious or not.
- Assemblies should involve pupils as active participants.
- Assemblies should foster a sense of community within our school: a sense of shared values, identity, perception, outlook and purpose.

Assemblies should be EDUCATIONAL

- Assemblies should be governed by the same educational criteria that apply to any other educational activity. Assemblies should be learning experiences of real quality. They should be properly prepared, executed and reflected upon.
- The aims of assemblies should be educational and consistent with the educational aims of the school.
- Assemblies should be explicitly related to our Values programme or in the case of some class assemblies, related to topic work covered in class. The inclusion of a "worship" element means that assemblies will

naturally complement some of the work done in RE, providing insight into the nature and practice of worship.

- Assemblies should provide opportunities to reflect on, and celebrate, a range of educational and personal achievements (not simply academic and sporting success!)

Assemblies should be SPIRITUAL

- Assemblies must always provide an opportunity for pupils to take part in worship and should provide opportunities or spaces for individual responses. Often this will be facilitated by the use of a purposeful silence or reflection/prayer.
- Assembly should provide a breathing space in the busy whirl of school activity: a time to gather, to be still and to reflect.
- Assembly should be a “special” time with a distinctively spiritual atmosphere, one that is conducive to worship. The use of appropriate background music will help create such an ambience, and the setting for assembly should be made as attractive as possible. Often it will help if something is set up to act as a visual focus for those present.
- The pupils attending assembly should feel calm, relaxed and secure. Above all, they should be comfortable. Consideration should also be given to the manner in which pupils enter and leave assembly.
- Assemblies should provide opportunities for pupils to participate in a variety of spiritual activities, such as worship, singing, dancing, drama, prayer, quiet contemplation and meditation. These activities should always be undertaken with care and sensitivity, and it is a legal requirement that they should be appropriate to the pupils’ ages, aptitudes and family background. It is also mandatory that such activities, when constituting worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, should not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.

Appendix

Collective Worship – Class Assemblies

Class Assemblies

- Class Assemblies should be 15 – 20 minutes long.
- Parents/carers, grandparents, siblings are officially invited to attend a week before the assembly takes place.
- It should be educationally relevant; assemblies should link to learning (covering a range of the curriculum) or the value for that half term.
- Assemblies should be fully inclusive; all children should be involved in some way; this may include I.T, stage management, acting, singing, dancing, speaking, sharing work, instruments, science experiment demo, etc. Make sure it is not just the academically able who have a chance to shine.
- Well-practised, good quality presentation. Make sure the children understand your expectations for a good performance. Can they recall good assemblies? What made them so good?
- Good behaviour from children presenting.

- Children should learn their words where possible.
- Good communication skills - drama techniques such as loud voices, facing audience when speaking, etc should be used. Try to involve the audience – use humour, etc where appropriate.
- The audience should learn something from the assembly.
- Must include a reflection, (an element of collective worship – this can take the form of a prayer or song and can be delivered by the children). This should be thought provoking and should link to the assembly.
- Children could make up and share the prayer/reflection to close the assembly.
- Assemblies should combine a variety of different ways for children to express themselves – i.e. music, drama, etc.
- Children should be able to contribute their ideas towards their assembly, (some could even write it!) – It should not be a totally 'teacher constructed script' with children learning/reading out the parts!
- Should be visual – costumes, scenery, etc. where appropriate (but don't go overboard! – can do some prep in class or ask children to bring in costumes etc from home).

NB – Collective worship is to be mainly of a broadly Christian nature. Parents do have the right to request their children are withdrawn from it, (by letter to, or agreement with, the Headteacher). However, this should not mean that the rest of the children do not have the collective worship that they have a right to have, (and of course the law requires).

We should be careful not to cause offence to children who practise other religions by having an assembly geared towards their religion, then not observing the strict guidelines required for prayer, etc. This is likely to cause more offence than them sitting through a 'Christian' assembly. No child should be forced to participate in doing something they do not agree with/feel comfortable with doing.