



Collective Worship



Paul Dunning
Diocesan Director of Education

Over the ten years I've been working with the Diocese I have been on a learning journey regarding what is different and special about Church of England schools.

This edition of Footprints gets to the heart of the matter – a daily act of Collective Worship for the whole school community that is inclusive, invitational, and inspiring. It is inspiring to me as I read these articles in Footprints to see children fully engaged and positively impacted as they lead and

participate in Collective Worship.

There is a legal framework and statutory duty to provide Collective Worship. Our schools embrace this opportunity so that there is an affirmation and celebration of our Christian ethos where adults and children can learn, worship and grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. It is therefore the 'heartbeat' of everything that we do and an expression of our Christian vision and values.

This is reflected in the many positive comments in SIAMS inspections reports such as:

- Daily acts of collective worship set a spiritual tone that permeates the atmosphere of the school. Everyone is treated with respect and consideration during worship as adults and pupils reflect with calmness and curiosity. This daily encounter with the teachings of

Christ positively impacts on behaviour and relationships throughout the whole day.

- Collective worship is at the heart of the school and reflects Christian values that support 'learning for a fuller life'. Invitational prayer and times of reflection contribute to the spiritual experience of worship.
- Collective worship is thoughtfully planned, incorporating the school's vision and values. Its impact on the life of the school is profound. Pupils are respectful and interested, with the eldest taking a leading role.

If you want to get more involved in this aspect of school life, can I encourage you to attend our online Collective Worship network led by Chris Allen which meets four times a year, 2-4pm. Visit: www.DofN.org/cw-bestpractice

Anne Neary

Executive Headteacher
Nar Valley Federation of Church
Academies (Castle Acre, Narborough
and Sporle CofE Primary schools)

At Nar Valley, we wanted to enhance opportunities for spirituality. We focused on the profound nature of silence, of creating an atmosphere of wonder and a shared prayer experience. Sitting in circles on the floor surrounded by benches and choosing where you sit symbolises the fact that we are all part of a school community, surrounded by the wider Federation, but also by God's love. Walking into the Circle of Reflection in prayerful silence enables us to be ready for deep thought, then greeting each person who sits in your circle with a smile emphasises that we are all part of this together. We have a focus; this can be an object such as a candle, or a stone, or a branch, or it can be a picture, on a wall or on a projector. The idea is to meet this with a calm, open mind, empty of the day's busy thoughts, ready to reflect and share. When a person, child or adult is ready, they can say their thought. Some offer plenty and often, some only listen,



but we are all participating. Our Values Ambassadors record the offerings in a Circle of Reflection book or display. At the point when there is silence and worship is to draw to a close, the group nearest the door stand and leave, then each group moves out silently in turn. To have this time and space in the day to be prayerful, reflect on something simple but awe-inspiring, and to quiet the mind is valuable in many ways. Children have said what they are grateful for, what they wish for others, their hopes, their worries and

what they wonder about. Children have grown in confidence as time has gone on and the power of their words and thoughts never fails to evoke a reaction.

"I hope everyone remembers the true meaning of Christmas" "I hope people at war have enough food to eat" "I hope lonely people have someone to talk to and love them" "I hope everyone has a warm cuddle when they get home" "I am thankful for the new Reception children because they make me smile- and help me be positive"

Caroline Hutton

Schools and Families Worker
Earsham Benefice covering Ditchingham,
Earsham and Alburgh with Denton
Primary Academies

Collective Worship in the Earsham Benefice

Here in the Earsham Benefice we have built on a rich heritage of schools work to provide weekly collective worship to our three Church of England Academies. We also support two other schools in our local area with fortnightly and half termly collective worships. This gives us the privilege to tell at least 280 people a week about the good news of Jesus. We have created our collective worship planning around 'Values for Life' and key biblical themes. We are warmly welcomed by our schools and value the relationships we have built with the academies over the past 10 years.

Many have asked us why we put so much energy into collective worship and our answer is always the same, why would



you turn down the opportunity to tell 280 people a week about Jesus. Our belief is that the primary role of ministry is to share God's words with people; collective worship provides a platform to do this.

By using the structure of 'Values for Life' we can explore bible stories and principles, helping people to understand these values from a secular and Christian perspective. We seek to give all practical ways to apply the 'Values for Life' to their lives. Collective worship has also provided us with an excellent

opportunity to explore spirituality and reflection with schools. We have been given an amazing privilege to work in this way with our schools.

It can be hard sometimes to read of success in one place when you are struggling in yours, please do not be disheartened. It has taken God time to grow our ministry using the giftings he has given us. Each ministry looks different, but God will use your gifts! If anyone would like any advice or support please do reach out to the Earsham Benefice.



Harriet Beckett
Headteacher
Pulham VC Primary

We'll take every opportunity we can to celebrate at Pulham CE Primary School. Collective worship gives us the chance to do this! The Church of England's vision for education is based on a verse from the book of John about living life in all its fullness and we relish every opportunity to do this and to celebrate all that is good in our world. Our weekly pattern of worship is built around this.

We aim to reflect the Church of England's worship, using coloured cloths on the worship table that reflect the liturgical calendar, lighting a candle every session and opening with a call and response gather phrase. This grounds us in our cultural heritage as a church school. We also regularly welcome a team from the local church for Open the Book and the incumbent leads sessions in school

and in church.

The content of our worship sessions aims to be inspirational, challenging and reflective. We follow the same format weekly, trying to link the world, the community and our school.

My most favourite part of the week is our 'Life in all its fullness' sessions. In these sessions we reflect on things happening in the world around us and celebrate key events in history and annual celebrations. This year alone we have covered a vast range including: The Big Bird Watch; Winnie the Pooh day; The International Day of Peace; World Religion Day and important themes like mental health and wellbeing and the importance of recycling. This followed the celebration of our achievement as an Eco school – something we're incredibly proud of – and offered the chance for children to reflect on the part they play in caring for God's creation. Everything we cover links back to our vision for all children's flourishing captured in our hope to see everyone 'shine as lights

in the world'. It truly is my joy to lead children in these sessions.

But the children's favourite session of the week? Circle time. Circle time is a weekly session led by the children. During this time, all children from across the school move to different locations in their house teams. Led by our year six children, they learn more about the weekly value, offering an opportunity for further discussion and reflection. Although the activities are planned by adults, the children very much enjoy being led by the older pupils and having a chance for team activities and games. There's something powerful about being led by your peers in these reflections.

Collective worship should be transformative, and I believe the way we do things at Pulham CE Primary sets the tone and drives our culture whilst being rooted in the history of the Church of England. Enjoying everything that the world and life has to offer is important for us and we try to bring this together in our daily acts of worship.

Governor and Clerk update



Hannah Monk
Head of Governance
hannah.monk@
donesc.org
01603 881741

Collective Worship is described by the Church of England as “the unique heartbeat of a Church school”. As such it is a great opportunity for governors to experience the heart and values of their schools in action.

We are always talking about the formal monitoring that governors undertake in schools, but collective worship, celebrations, festivals and services are fantastic “soft monitoring” opportunities too. Make sure that your school is sharing its calendar of events with you so that you can attend when it fits your availability. Every visit that you make as governors or trustees to a school is an opportunity to record your involvement with the school as a monitoring report. Anyone governing in our schools who has met me will know how much I like to remind everyone that

if it is not written down it didn't happen, so when you visit, make it count.

For Collective Worship in particular, SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) will also evaluate the impact of collective worship on the school community and its contribution to the values and ethos of the school. Your monitoring records can really help to build up the evidence base. None of us are volunteering our time for the purpose of inspection outcomes however attending or taking part in collective worship is a great way to get to know the “heartbeat” of the school while contributing to the evidence base for SIAMS.

You don't need to reinvent the wheel, the Church of England's guidance uses (www.DofN.org/collective-worship-guidance) these useful headings, which I highly recommend as the basis for recording your thoughts about Collective Worship.

Inclusive

Not only are all pupils included no matter what their faith but also is the

whole pupil community given the opportunity to contribute?

Invitational

Is collective worship presented to pupils, parents and staff as an opportunity to engage rather than something they must do?

Inspiring

Does the collective worship you encounter in your school encourage children and adults to ask big questions? And don't forget there are training opportunities that will support you to understand and monitor the impact of collective worship –

- Introduction to Monitoring in Church Schools and Academies
- Introduction to Governance in Church Schools and Academies
- Introduction to the SIAMS Schedule for Governors

All training scheduled through the Diocese and DoNESC is available to book on GovernorHub here:

www.DofN.org/govhubtraining

Welcome

Heads starting

Julia Norman – Ingoldisthorpe VA Primary

Farewell & thanks

Heads leaving

Alex Griffiths – Sunflower Federation (leaving May half term)

St Benet's MAT conversions

1 April 2024

Swallowtail Federation (Catfield Primary Academy, Hickling Infant Academy and Sutton Infant Academy)

SIAMS congratulations

Congratulations to the following schools that have had their SIAMS inspections this term.

Garboldisham Primary Academy (St Benet's)

Hockering Primary Academy (DNEAT)

Kelling VA Primary

Brisley Primary Academy (DNEAT)



Headteachers Conference 2024

To book your place please visit:

www.DofN.org/Headteachers2024 / Password: HTconference 2024