

Application for a determination on Collective Worship from Godolphin Junior School

Relevant documentation:

- Application form from the school
- School's policy on collective worship
- Report from Jo Fageant following a monitoring visit to the school.

THE GODOLPHIN EDUCATION TRUST

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

1 Introduction

The law and collective worship.

This statement is written in conformity with the Education Act 1988 and DfE Circular 1/94. Briefly, the law requires that collective worship should be daily, provided for all children unless they have been withdrawn by their parents. Collective worship must be non-denominational and must take place on school premises. Over a period of a term the majority of acts of collective worship must be of a moral and spiritual character (* see below). Collective worship must be educational and when considering the content of collective worship account must be taken of "any circumstances relating to the family backgrounds of the pupils concerned which are relevant for determining the character of collective worship which is appropriate in their case, and their ages and aptitudes".

2 Determination *

By law, Collective worship must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" unless a school applies for "determination" to release the school from this commitment. In order to reflect the diversity of faiths represented in our school, we have sought and obtained a determination from SACRE (Standing Advisory Council On Religious Education). The determination permits us to deliver collective worship of a moral and spiritual character instead of a broadly Christian character.

3 Right of withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their children and teachers have the right not to attend. However we would hope that most people would feel comfortable with the type of collective worship offered at our school. If parents do withdraw their children from collective worship they should provide suitable material for the child to read/contemplate during this time. Any pupil who does not attend collective worship because of another activity will be provided with time to carry out an act of worship at an alternative time.

4 Our Aims

The aim of this policy is to conform to the letter and spirit of the Law and ensure that collective worship contributes to the social, moral and spiritual education of our pupils. All acts of collective worship provide opportunities to worship, to consider spiritual and moral issues and explore personal beliefs both individually and corporately. Collective worship is also seen as an opportunity to foster a sense of community, identity and self esteem and to celebrate individual and group achievements.

5 Organisation of collective worship

The organisation of collective worship is the responsibility of the headteacher, after consultation with the school governors. The weekly delivery of collective worship is as follows:-

- a) MONDAY: SONG PRACTICE (Worship is 5 minutes within the 30 minute Practice which is supportive). Song

Song practice will support the collective worship theme for the week. Songs will come from a variety of cultures and periods and reflect the ethos of the school. Opportunity will be taken during this time to reflect upon the attitude or meaning of the song.

- b) TUESDAY TO THURSDAY
Class based assembly (3 X 15 minutes). Assemblies are based on a four year programme. Each year band will have a programme which is similar throughout the school. The differences will be in delivery, knowledge and concepts experienced.
- c) FRIDAY - SCHOOL ASSEMBLY
(The time allocated to worship is 15 minutes for each 30 minute assembly). This will be a presented assembly involving teachers, children and visitors. The theme for this assembly will be linked to the weekly theme and address the need for personal and community responsibility.

6 Content, including visiting speakers

Within each term the majority of acts of worship are wholly or mainly of a broadly moral character. Acts of worship which contain elements inspired by a number of different faiths are also appropriate. Any secular acts of collective worship will, where appropriate contain moral, spiritual or social messages and should always provide an opportunity for worship. A variety of methods will be used including music, poetry, drama, visual aids and speakers. Any songs or prayers used will be sensitively chosen. When planning, appropriate themes will be used such as, festivals, friendship and the environment. During class time the teacher may read out the thought for the week and the children will be given the opportunity to discuss and reflect in silence.

Plans for collective worship should not be seen as rigid. There should always be flexibility to allow for the spontaneous, for example, a snowfall, a national event or school event. A school diary sheet will be available on a termly basis detailing the plans for collective worship and any dates for the appearance of visiting speakers for that term.

7 Planning And Record Keeping

The school is developing a rolling programme of themes for collective worship. This programme clearly identifies collective worship as a separate activity from R.E. in the curriculum although they can be mutually supportive. The programme will ensure continuity and progression and will be available to parents.

Record keeping by teachers will identify details of content and approaches in order to ensure a balance of teaching styles and to inform parents should they be considering withdrawing their child.

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

APPLICATION FOR A DETERMINATION ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Headteacher of a school seeking a determination under section 12 of the Education Reform Act, 1988 is asked to complete this form and send it to the Clerk to the SACRE.

- 1. Name and Address of School**
Godolphin Junior School Academy

Oatlands Drive

Slough

SL1 3HS

- 2. Age range of School: 7-11** **3. Number on Roll: 360**

- 4. Date on which the Governing Body was consulted on this application:**

The Governing Body was consulted on 24.6.13

- 5. Have the parents of children at the school been consulted and if so, what views did they express?**

Our parents are invited to their child's class assembly which allows observation of the format and style of the assemblies in general and watch their child's participation.

Parents have been consulted by letter (September 2013) informing them about the Determination Application and asking for their comments. Several parents, who are new to the school, have asked questions and have all been happy with the school's approach and supported the application.

- 6. How many children are withdrawn by their parents from collective worship?**

None

- 7. If so, from which faith background do these children come?**

Not applicable

- 8. Does the application cover the whole school? Yes/No**
If no what is the class or description of children for whom a determination is sought?

The application does cover the whole school.

9. Please detail any information that you consider relevant about the family background of the children in question.

The majority of our pupils are not from a Christian background.

The breakdown of religion, as identified by parents is as follows:

80.6% Muslim, 5.3% Christian, 5% Sikh, 4.4% Hindu, 2.8% No Religion and 1.7% Other Religion.

Through the values and ethos of our school, and the strong emphasis we base on PSICHE, we develop the moral and spiritual awareness of our pupils.

We place equal emphasis on the religions that are practised by our families. We place special emphasis on the festivals of Christmas, Divali, Eid and Baisakhi where the pupils have a 'Festive Lunch' and wear their own clothes.

We also learn about other festivals through assemblies e.g. Easter. The parents and pupils understand that all religions are shown equal respect and emphasis and all pupils participate in these days.

Our pupils have a positive attitude towards learning about different faiths and study Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Christianity in R.E. During their time in school they visit a Mosque, Hindu Temple, Gurdwara and Slough Baptist Church. All pupils usually take part in the visits. The school has a good relationship with Slough Baptist Church who frequently visit and lead the Easter Assembly.

10. What kind of collective worship are you seeking to provide for the children covered by this application?

Our program of Collective Worship, including assemblies and song practice, reflect the core values of our school of moral and spiritual development and respect and acceptance of other faiths and beliefs. We seek to develop an awareness of the wonder of the world around us and reflect on this. We seek to highlight the common themes that different faiths share and develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of how religions may differ but values can be shared.

We aim to develop our pupils' awareness of living in a country and wider world where people of different religions can live harmoniously, with respect, interest and appreciation of different faiths.

11. Does this represent a continuation of present practice or would it be an innovation?

This represents a continuation of current practise.

12. What practical arrangements do you plan to make? (e.g. timing, location, who will organise it?)

'Song Practise' takes place for 30 minutes each week, using songs that have spiritual and moral values. Year 3 and 4 have Song Practise on a Monday and Year 5 and 6 on a Tuesday.

Assembly takes place, usually on a Friday from 9-9.30 am, led by a member of staff or class. This consists of greetings, a themed content, a moment of reflection or prayer and a song.

Collective Worship takes place in class on the remaining 3 days.

There is a weekly programme of themes. These are linked with assemblies and events across the school year. They are led by the class teacher for 15 minutes . They vary in content and may contain stories, discussion, reflection on images or listening to music. A moment of reflection is included.

13. If there are any children not covered by the application, what arrangements do you plan to make for them?

There are not any children who need alternative arrangements.

14. Is there any other information you would like the SACRE to take into account?

The system in place is very successful in meeting the needs of our pupils and families. Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils is enshrined in our school ethos.

Our last Ofsted Inspection (May 2011) noted:

“Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in this cohesive and harmonious school. Of special note is pupils’ respect for other cultures and backgrounds.”

Signed Date

(Please return to the Clerk to the SACRE.....)

Report of a monitoring visit to Godolphin Junior School.

I met with the former coordinator for worship and religious education, Emma Tate, who had prepared the documentation for the determination application. These responsibilities have recently passed to another member of staff. In addition to the documentation included with this report, further records were seen including the minutes of a governors' meeting at which it had been agreed to request a further determination; evidence of consultation with parents about this this proposal.

Discussion with Emma confirmed and expanded upon information provided in the application and the school's collective worship policy statement. Excellent records are kept to document the practices outlined in these papers. For example there are records of themes planned and covered in worship as well as records of all the songs chosen and learned to support worship. It is clear that themes and songs are carefully selected to enable worship to be inclusive and rich provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

On the day of the monitoring visit worship took place in classrooms. The act of worship observed was thought-provoking for Year 4 children and drew on their learning about both Islam and Christianity. Pupils responded well: they were attentive, responsive, engaged and respectful. The worship included time for reflection and a prayer. There is a set time for classroom worship and this ensures there should be no interruptions to disturb these sessions.

Evidence makes it clear that all religious traditions are respected through worship and that despite the small percentage of children identified as Christians, Christianity is far from ignored. Key times such as Christmas, Easter and Lent, St George's Day etc are celebrated and their significance understood from religious and cultural perspectives. The school organises a carol concert for senior citizens. This year the school is taking part in British Food Fortnight, the theme of which is *Bringing the harvest home*. Following varied activities in school, twenty pupils from diverse religious backgrounds will be attending a service at Westminster Abbey which will include 800 children from schools around the country.

On the basis of the documentation provided and evidence gathered through this visit to the school, I recommend that the determination be granted and the school encouraged to continue with the high quality worship provision it currently offers.

Jo Fageant
24 September 2013