

HOYLANDSWAINE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Rationale

‘All maintained schools must provide religious education and daily collective worship for all registered pupils and promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development.’

‘Collective worship in county schools and equivalent grant-maintained schools must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, though not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.’

Department for Education. 1994

Hoylandswaine Primary school provides a daily assembly for all children which is broadly Christian in nature. Usually this takes place as a whole school in the hall but we may occasionally hold class collective worship assemblies in the classroom.

Any hymns, songs and prayers used in worship are Christian and the cycle of Christian festivals is followed throughout the year. The Vicar regularly takes assemblies and some are also presented in the church. Other world religions are also mentioned where appropriate and stories and moral teachings from these religions are conveyed to the pupils to fulfil the obligation to take into account the teaching and practices of other principal religions.

Once a week we hold hymn practice. The purpose of this is to explore ways of expressing and exploring faith through music and song. The children are introduced to a range of hymns and religious songs which are practised in this session. The songs are then played daily as the children enter and exit assembly. This improves the children’s memory skills, as well as allowing them to celebrate together as a whole school. The children have a chance to perform the songs they have practised together at church services, such as harvest and Easter, and at various events which take place at school throughout the year.

Other assemblies we may hold give opportunities to promote a set of shared values which the school promotes through the curriculum, through expectations governing the behaviour of pupils and staff and through day to day contact between them make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and should be at the heart of every school's educational and pastoral policy and practice.

Good listening skills and respect is modelled and encouraged in all our assemblies.

As well as Christian values, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning are also followed through half termly SEAL themes running through school in assembly, RE & PSHE. The Government also attaches great importance to the role of religious education and collective worship in helping to promote among pupils a clear set of personal values and beliefs. An anti-bullying theme may be promoted, for example.

Inclusion

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from the daily act of worship if they wish.

At Hoylandswaine we liaise closely with parents when their child first comes to school to accommodate their wishes about withdrawal from collective worship and RE lessons.

Experience suggests that, to avoid misunderstanding, a class teacher or head teacher will find it helpful to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right of withdrawal the religious issues about which the parent would object to his or her child:

- being taught
- the practical implications of withdrawal
- the circumstances in which the school can reasonably be expected to accommodate parental wishes
- whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such RE, and, if so, how much

As part of the transition into school, an interview is arranged with the child's class teacher to ask a series of questions to determine answers to the above and any other points a parent may wish to raise. These points are then shared with the Head Teacher and other staff and used in future along with the advanced communication and sharing of planning with parents which is usual at Hoylandswaine School. Both school and parents thus have advanced information to ensure the smooth running of day to day organisation. In order to include all children as much as possible, children come into some assemblies and withdraw for some parts e.g. the celebration of birthdays, prayers.

Given the above we are also aware that the parental right to withdraw a child from receiving RE should be freely exercisable and a school must give effect to any such request. Parents are not obliged to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal.

Children are also permitted to attend religious meetings or take religious holidays during school time where these are an integral part of their family's religion.

EYFS pupils

Nursery children are not legally obliged to take part in collective worship so new Foundation Stage Two pupils starting at our school who are four years old may be unused to attending daily assembly. To aid the transition, new EYFS children gradually build up the number of assemblies they are ready to attend until they come to all five daily assemblies by the summer term. In the interim, classroom Class One assemblies can be held with the peer group.

Parental involvement

To aid cohesion and the sense of community, parents are invited to many assemblies throughout the year including Class assemblies presented by the children.

June 2014