

No: 08

THE THOMAS AVELING SCHOOL

POLICY

for

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Revised December 2002 – SBE
To Governors
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The Thomas Aveling Policy Statement on Collective Worship and Spiritual and Moral Education

Within the school it is regarded as axiomatic that the moral, religious, spiritual and cultural development of each student is fundamental to every aspect of the curriculum. The Code of Conduct supports and makes explicit this philosophy, and helps to both develop a sense of right and wrong and show tolerance to each other.

Whilst it is within Religious Education in particular that religious beliefs, teachings and practices are taught, other subjects also invite students to reflect, both implicitly and explicitly, on purposes and meanings in life. It is hoped that in every area students feel valued and have a sense of purpose and identity.

Collective Worship

Introduction

In the course of each week, all students attend a weekly main act of collective worship within their house groupings. This is led on alternative weeks by a member of the leadership team and the Directors of Learning or Head of House. This enables all students to have a sense of belonging within their house and school community.

During tutor time and assemblies, students give consideration to the Thought of the Week. A copy of this is given to each tutor to display in their tutor group rooms. The thoughts are selected on the basis that they give a focus for reflection on different aspects of spiritual and ethical development.

Within the school, we have students and staff from a wide variety of faith traditions, including Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus as well as many not committed to any particular faith. It is recognised that because of the different backgrounds within the school our worship must be open ended and safeguard the integrity of the participants. Students feel free to explore their own beliefs and enjoy learning about and experiencing the beliefs of others.

The Aims

The school aims to provide an opportunity for students to worship and to reflect on and celebrate the values and ethos of the school. Collective worship is a focus for spiritual development and an area for spiritual and personal growth. Its concern is to share common aims and values, celebrate achievements and special times and explore current themes and events in the world around us. It provides opportunities to explore and reflect on the concerns of us all on matters of life and death, the purpose and quality of life, and lifetime choices. It provides an opportunity for considering moral issues. Another important aim is to enable students to see themselves as part of a community. It is recognised that for some the school environment can be a students' main source of security and thus collective worship provides the potential for exploring what it means to belong to a community with shared values and beliefs.

The Nature of Collective Worship

The emphasis in the course of the year will be on Christian beliefs and values although there will also be opportunities to explore and give value to the contribution and ethos of other religious and secular groups. Students are involved in collective worship by participating in musical items, drama,

reports etc. Students are given the chance to reflect on their own beliefs and lives and to respond to the examples of others. Collective Worship is a time when the houses in the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils an opportunity to worship through engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences. Collective Worship contributes to the development of the pupil as a 'whole' person by providing opportunities to reflect on issues and concepts greater than ourselves. An example of this is the interaction with the house charities where students are given the opportunity to reflect on the lives of others, often in very different situations to their own lives and to participate in giving to the lives of others in practical ways. Two examples are the relationship Cavalier house has with the Bantabami trust working with aids orphans in South Africa, as well a regular wear grey for a day activity to help the brainstrust charity. The school also gets involved with the regular Comic relief and Children in Need days.

It is the legal right of any parent/guardian to ask for their child to be withdrawn from collective worship. Should a parent wish to withdraw their child, initial application should be made to the Headteacher. Where this is deemed appropriate, students will be expected to provide their own study at the back of the Hall in the canteen area so that they can come in to hear important announcements and the recognition of student success.

The Delivery

Management of collective worship is the responsibility of the Co-ordinator of Spiritual, Moral and Religious Education within the school. Collective worship is usually delivered by a member of the leadership team, a Director of Learning or Head of House, and at times there are guest speakers. A rota of deliverers of collective worship and the thought of the week is given to each participating member of staff.

Quality in Collective Worship

It is accepted that collective worship should be like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing and evaluation. This being so, a variety of styles are employed. The content of all acts of Collective Worship will be considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils. ICT is regularly used in the delivery and music is also used either to set a mood or to enable student participation, or both. Drama and visual aids are also used to make concepts more accessible for students. Resources for collective worship are available in A2, including artifacts from different world religions, and are available to all staff.

Thoughts of the Week

Thoughts of the week are displayed on notice-boards throughout the school and are used by tutors with their tutor groups during the week. They are the basis for the collective worship and tutors develop their ideas further with their groups to facilitate reflection and discussion on spiritual and moral issues. Tutors also bring in relevant events and talking points in the news to relate issues to the world around us. Around the school building there are thoughts from different world religions painted strategically on walls.

The thoughts of the week are linked into the various habits of learning used in the different departments throughout the school. These habits help develop the spiritual and moral leaning of the

students and specify different aspects of this learning. Examples of these are the habits of Listening with Empathy, where departments help engender empathy for others and other viewpoints in students and Responding with Wonder and Awe where departments help students to be curious about the world around them and be open to its mysteries and wonders.

Spiritual and Moral Education

Opportunities for Spiritual and Moral Education are provided to students throughout the curriculum, in all subjects. The most obvious opportunities for development in these areas are in Religious Education, Citizenship and Personal and Social Education. Religious Education is taught to all students in Key Stage 3 and is taught in Key Stage 4 as Citizenship & Beliefs where students study the AQA Religious Studies module in Religion and Citizenship; this can lead to a full GCSE at the end of year 11.

In addition to the different subjects' contribution to spiritual and moral education the whole ethos of the school and specifically its House system with vertical tutor groups is a main contributor in this area. The House system engenders a spirit of community and interdependence where everyone works for the common success of the House. The Houses create an understanding of responsibility for actions as points can be won and lost depending on the actions of students.

The Houses each have a house charity and this helps students see practical ways in which they can help others and creates a spirit of compassion within students. The vertical tutor groupings within the Houses also create a smaller community unit where students from different age groups can help and mentor each other. Spiritual, moral and emotional issues can be discussed within these vertical tutor groups and older students can give guidance to younger students on issues they have already had to meet. Tutors also have mentoring sessions with students where issues can be discussed and options given.

Within the school there is the Lilac learners program where students who are identified as needing help with self-esteem are allocated a specific mentor who will meet regularly to help discuss issues and help the student build up their self-confidence.

Different areas of spiritual and moral education have been identified and are taught through the curriculum in different subject areas. For example the development of beliefs and values is developed in Business Studies when during BTEC unit 4 students investigate the beliefs and values of different companies and look at how the views of shareholders have an impact on the management of people. A sense of awe and wonder is engendered in Geography when students study the power and effects of volcanoes. A sense of transcendence is created in Art where students look at the place of art in the world and are encouraged to look at the world in new and different ways. Meaning and purpose is explored in Physical Education when students are encouraged to understand the meanings behind rules and how they help structure our physical activity. Relationships are explored in Dance where students have to develop an understanding of empathy to develop dances with other students. Creativity is taught and encouraged for example in English where students produce a piece of creative writing in response to a prose text. Ideas of truth are looked at in History, looking at the reliability of sources by exploring their provenance, looking at who created it and why. Ideas of justice and fairness are examined for example when looking at ideas in Rap and Blues in Music. Working cooperatively is reinforced in Drama where students work together to create successful school productions as well as in class work. Interdependence is explored in Science when students

look at ecology and the interdependence of living things with their environment. Students have opportunities to develop reflection in Design and Technology when evaluating their projects. These are just some examples of ways in which the whole curriculum at Thomas Aveling develops the spiritual and moral education of students.