

Questions for Staff Member in charge of Collective Worship

Do you have a clear idea of the nature and purpose of Collective Worship in your school?

DT: A mixed picture. At least one school expressed the need for help here.

PD: All the schools had a very clear idea of the nature and purpose of collective worship. There was also a strong understanding of the importance of focusing on Christianity but not to the exclusion of other religions. There was also a clear theme in the schools about enabling reflection.

MS: A mixed picture. The Church school was very clear.

VB: Yes. Linked to school vision and reflects the diverse school community. A balance between Belief, period of reflection and worship in assembly.

How well do you think your current practice is fulfilling this purpose?

DT: Schools which had a clear sense of purpose were reasonably happy with what they were doing. However there was some frustration that parental pressure against religion in general was limiting what they could do.

PD: The schools I visited felt comfortable in general terms, but the discussion was a timely reminder for a few that the programmes were not complete. The best practice existed where the year was planned out and fully integrated into the whole curriculum. Much was made of the various religious festivals, from a variety of religions where possible.

MS: The schools had a clear programme and schedule of assemblies (Head teachers assembly, celebration assembly, singing assembly for example) and assemblies were delivered every day. The Church schools appeared to have more of a spiritual nature with the LA schools being more PSHE based. The Church school felt it could do more around other faiths and, in conversation, the LA school felt there wasn't much awe and wonder.

VB: Happy with results from recent survey of parents.

What resources do you use that you would recommend to others?

DT: Several schools had resources which they said they would recommend to others. Often these were resources which individual headteachers had written themselves over time. Those schools which regularly invited in local faith leaders were very appreciative of these visits. One school recommended continuing the lockdown practice of beaming her assembly into individual classes.

PD: As one might expect, schools found the resources which best suited their own individual approach, and were comfortable in their use, but all hoped that the new syllabus would have complementing resources of high quality, to follow.

MS: the Church school had a published resource and the others had resources from other sources.

VB: Assemblies.org.uk – class reflection and picture news used weekly. School development plan gives high priority, using Building Bridges, Real People Real Faith and would like to see the place of worship behind the speaker. Wokingham booklet -Pebble in the Pond; Discovery RE a main resource.

What are the gaps in your provision? And what external support would you value?

DT: The main challenge is to find enough time for a truly reflective activity in time available. External support from faith communities is broadly welcomed.

PD: Again, schools were generally content, but where there was any doubt, it was to do with external visitors and support. Generally this meant local clergy and leaders of other faiths. Schools would welcome assistance with this.

MS: Schools were satisfied with their provision but would welcome more visitors.

VB: No gaps for church schools – happy with Diocesan provision. Assembly by local C of E Vicar fortnightly. Difficulty contacting other religious leaders, would like to invite more recommended visitors to speak as finding visits to places of worship expensive and difficult to organise.

Are you happy for us to include your email address in a list of those currently in charge of Collective Worship in W Berkshire schools?

DT: All happy for this.

PD: All keen to be involved in the local network and I will attach addresses at the end of this document. Some did not get the newsletter.

MS: Happy for this.

VB: On email list. Likes the SACRE newsletter.

Questions for RE Lead (or Headteacher if none exists)

How closely does your RE syllabus follow our Agreed Syllabus?

DT: All took good notice of the AS, though church schools also follow SIAMS guidelines.

PD: Clearer in secondary schools, which have a lead dedicated to that single subject and often intensively trained. Generally, schools were positive about how they used the Agreed Syllabus. They were happy to share. A few found the discussion especially helpful in the realisation that some parts of their practice needed revisiting.

MS: one school used the Hampshire syllabus as that was the one the head teacher had brought with them.

VB: Pretty close. The current syllabus doesn't give a lot of content for non-church schools. More detail in previous syllabus, current RE syllabus slimmed down too much. Likes the Behaving Believing Belonging approach and focus on world views.

In what ways would you like the new Agreed Syllabus to be different from the current one?

DT: Schools want more concrete ideas within the syllabus as to how to teach it. A progression map and supplementary material would be helpful.

PD: There is a clear desire to see the New Syllabus developing wider interpretations of religious themes and practices, and to encourage more integration of other religions.

MS: Very similar to DT comments above, and a document that was neither so large it was hard to navigate nor so slimmed down that it meant much more research was needed. Also some resources that could be used.

VB: Would like clearer progression for Christmas and Easter story for each stage. Would like more content with links to resources. More choice of resources please. Liked a question based approach.

In general, what training or resources would you value to support you in this role?

DT: Schools asked for training in relation to delivering the new AS. They were very interested to hear about "Real People, Real Faith" video series.

PD: Resources, other than the ones on the questionnaire (some were not aware of some! Primary schools need more input from the team), would be welcome. The launch of the new syllabus is a golden opportunity to get people together and get their attention, with well researched and presented resources. Help to have meaningful contact with clergy and other faith leaders was mentioned by all.

MS: Training in the new AS.

VB: Training very good when staff have time to attend termly network meetings. Appreciate the SACRE newsletter recommending resources.