SHANKLEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Collective Worship Policy and Guidelines

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Policy and Guidelines for Acts of Collective Worship

Introduction

In view of the fact that thirteen years have elapsed since Northumberland County Council last issued guidance about Acts of Collective Worship (1994), the Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE) felt it appropriate to revise the existing documentation to reflect current best practice. I wish to make it clear at the outset that the legislation determining the nature of collective worship in community schools has not altered in any significant shape or form since the Education Reform Act, 1988 became effective. However, understanding of how to make that legislation meaningful in increasingly multifaith but predominantly secular school communities has changed considerably over the last decade or so. There is now a growing debate among teachers, educationalists and others about what constitutes good practice in relation to Acts of Collective Worship. Hence this new Policy and Guidelines. It is informed by the views and recommendations that have emerged in the last few years.

Northumberland County Council recognises the value of collective worship as an integral part of the whole curriculum in community schools, and believes collective worship can make an invaluable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils, both those with faith commitments and those without. Collective worship can also provide valuable learning experiences that are distinctive from the taught curriculum.

It is essential at this point to say that the Policy and Guidelines applies to Northumberland's community schools. Schools that are faith schools, although they may find some of this information and advice helpful in planning, preparing and delivering worship, are required to provide worship that is shaped by a variety of influences somewhat different to community schools. These influences include legislation, the individual school's trust deed and, if the school is Anglican or Catholic, guidelines issued by the local diocese.

May I take this opportunity to thank all members of the SACRE, members of the SACRE Collective Worship Sub-Group who prepared the first drafts of this document, and the many school-based teachers who critically evaluated the various drafts. As was the case with the Agreed Syllabus launched in 2004, this has been a great team effort. I commend this Policy and Guidelines to you as a way of enhancing even further the good quality Acts of Collective Worship already witnessed in many of our community schools.

Chair of SACRE

Summary of the Legislative Requirements for Collective Worship

A **daily** act of collective worship (ACW) must be provided for all registered pupils in full-time education, except for pupils withdrawn at the wish of their parents or sixth form students who have withdrawn themselves (this includes pupils in reception classes and students in schools with a sixth form. Special schools are to meet the legislative requirement for daily worship "so far as is practicable").

A sixth form student is any pupil who has ceased to be of compulsory school age and is receiving education suitable to the requirements of pupils over compulsory school age.

Daily ACWs may be organised for separate groups of pupils (e.g. they can be provided for individual class groups or for year groups or for key stages rather than for the whole school) and can take place at any time during the school day (e.g. first thing in the morning, just before or after morning break, just before or after lunch or at the end of the day).

Over every term, a majority of ACWs must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, though not distinctive of a particular Christian denomination.

ACWs that are broadly Christian must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief to an extent and in a way which gives them a Christian character.

All ACWs must be appropriate to the family background, ages and aptitudes of the pupils involved.

Where it is difficult to reconcile these requirements, either in the case of the whole school or a particular category of pupils, the headteacher may apply to the SACRE for a determination that the requirement for Christian ACWs should not apply in the case of the school or a particular category of pupils within it (determinations are normally reviewed by the SACRE after five years).

In cases where the SACRE supports the school's application, a non-Christian ACW, suitable for the whole school or a particular category of pupils, must be provided.

Pupils withdrawn from Christian ACWs must be provided with an alternative ACW on a daily basis. However, the ACW must not be distinctive of any particular denomination of any religion, but may be distinctive of a particular religion.

Teachers, including headteachers, have the right to withdraw from the ACW. Teachers who exercise this right should not be disqualified from employment or discriminated against in any way.

The school prospectus or brochure must contain information about the provision for ACWs, the parents' right to withdraw their children and, if appropriate, the right of sixth form students to withdraw themselves.

Responsibility for ensuring that the legislative requirements relating to ACWs are met rests with the headteacher in consultation with the governing body.

Summary of the Latest Thinking about Good Collective Worship

Given the nature of the vast majority of community schools at the present time (they are predominantly secular but multifaith communities), it is quite inappropriate to insist on too narrow an interpretation of the requirement to provide ACWs that are wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. Why? Because we run the risk of offending or upsetting non-Christians and/or of compelling non-Christians to engage in activities that conflict with dearly and sincerely held beliefs.

The nub of the issue inevitably surrounds the word "worship".

What does "worship" mean?
What does "worship" entail?
And what must happen for "worship" to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character"?

Moreover, whatever "worship" is, it is something that individuals should enter into freely. The idea that we might require or compel people to "worship" is simply unacceptable. Indeed, it is the opinion of many that such requiring or compelling to engage in "worship" is a breach of an individual's human rights. No wonder that, today, it is the generally held view among the great majority of teachers, educationalists and experts in the field that the present legislative framework presents community schools with a dilemma of potentially epic proportions. It is for this reason, of course, that most people advocate that the present legislative framework be revised.

However, because most people also recognise that bringing the whole school community together is of immense value in terms of, for example, reinforcing shared values and common aspirations, such people rarely advocate the complete scrapping of the legislation as it applies to ACWs, merely its revision. Hence the view which is emerging nationally that the ACW must be replaced with an act of collective reflection which is no longer wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character but provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on a diverse range of world views, religious and otherwise.

In the light of this, and by taking account of the Education Reform Act, 1988, DfEE, DfES and QCA circulars, guidance and other documentation about collective worship (e.g. Circular 1/94), it can be said that the following principles underpin good collective worship in community schools. The ACW:

- must be inclusive
- should promote a sense of community
- should enable participants to be actively involved

- should promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development
- should be a memorable occasion
- should be of a high quality
- should, where appropriate, provide those who believe in God/gods with the opportunity to worship God/gods, but those who do not believe in God/gods must be free not to engage in such worship
- must, in a majority of cases, contain some elements which relate specifically to the Christian religion, and, where appropriate, address the special status accorded to Jesus, but when such material is shared with non-Christian pupils it should be shared in a spirit and in a manner which is educational in intent. In other words, pupils should be informed that Christians believe that Jesus in the Son of God. Christians who attend the ACW might be afforded an opportunity to worship him, perhaps as the ACW nears its conclusion. However, whilst non-Christian pupils will not be required to worship Jesus, they shall be invited, to encourage the feeling of community, to reflect in silence on what they have heard.

Aims and Objectives of Acts of Collective Worship

Northumberland County Council believes that, for ACWs to be truly beneficial and to provide worthwhile educational experiences, they should:

- be planned, prepared and delivered in a manner which ensures that parents do not feel compelled to withdraw their children and sixth form students to not feel compelled to withdraw themselves
- be inclusive occasions which reflect the beliefs, practices, aspirations and achievements of the whole school community
- provide opportunities to examine the beliefs and practices of our increasingly diverse community locally, regionally, nationally and globally
- provide opportunities for pupils to examine and reflect on their own beliefs and values and the beliefs and values of others
- examine both that which unites as well as divides the human family
- encourage tolerance and respect for diversity
- foster a respect for truth based on reason, evidence, discussion and debate

- where appropriate, provide opportunities to examine a variety of ultimate questions and relevant moral, political, religious and social issues
- provide opportunities to celebrate human achievement
- cultivate a sense of wonder and awe
- be occasions that are meaningful and worthwhile from an educational point of view
- Where appropriate, encourage pupil participation
- where appropriate, make use of outside speakers representing a variety of viewpoints
- contribute to the SMSC development of pupils
- where appropriate, provide opportunities to revere or venerate a divine power or being.

Northumberland County Council's Policy for Acts of Collective Worship

In the light of the current legislative requirements and some of the latest thinking about good ACWs, Northumberland County Council urges all community schools to:

- plan all ACWs with the principles, aims and objectives above firmly in mind
- provide a **daily** ACW for all registered pupils in full-time education, except those withdrawn at the wish of their parents or, if sixth form students, withdrawing themselves
- provide such ACWs to class groups, year groups, key stages or the whole school, as appropriate
- provide such ACWs at different times of the school day, as appropriate
- ensure that, every term, a majority of ACWs are wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character but not distinctive of a particular Christian denomination
- ensure that ACWs are appropriate to the family background, ages and aptitudes of the pupils involved
- where appropriate, seek a determination from SACRE that the requirement for Christian ACWs should not apply in the case of the school or a particular category of pupils within it

- provide an appropriate ACW for pupils exempted from broadly Christian worship
- ensure that teachers are aware of their rights in relation to ACWs
- ensure that parents are aware of their right to withdraw their children from ACWs and that sixth form students know of their right to withdraw themselves
- ensure that the school brochure or prospectus contains information about the provision for ACWs, the parents' right to withdraw their children and, if appropriate, the right of sixth form students to withdraw themselves
- ensure that the headteacher and the governing body are aware of their responsibilities in relation to ACWs
- ensure that an up-to-date policy and guidelines for ACWs has been adopted by the governing body and is understood by all teaching staff, and that the policy and guidelines is subject to regular review
- ensure that relevant teaching staff engage in regular training about ACWs
- ensure that ACWs are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation, both by teaching staff and the governing body
- ensure that the teacher or teachers responsible for planning, preparing and delivering ACWs have sufficient time and resources to meet their responsibilities
- ensure that staff are aware of the many people and agencies in the wider community that can assist schools with the planning, preparation and delivery of ACWs.

Guidelines for Acts of Collective Worship

These guidelines take into account the requirements set out in the Education Reform Act, 1988 and Circular 1/94 on Religious Education and Collective Worship.

Northumberland County Council recognises the value of collective worship as an integral part of the whole curriculum in community schools, and believes collective worship can make an invaluable contribution to the SMSC development of all pupils, both those with faith commitments and those without.

The role of the Headteacher

- Headteachers should be aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to collective worship, and take account of the ACW Policy and Guidelines issued by Northumberland County Council.

- Headteachers should ensure that governors and staff are informed about their legal responsibilities and receive training in order to implement the local authority's ACW Policy and Guidelines.
- Headteachers may designate responsibility for co-ordinating collective worship to a member or members of staff.
- Alternatively, a working group, comprising perhaps staff, pupils, governors and members of faith communities, might be convened to take responsibility for collective worship.

The role of the Governors

- Governors must be familiar with all documentation regarding collective worship issued to parents on their behalf, and may wish to be actively involved in the planning, delivery, monitoring and/or evaluation of collective worship within the school.
- Governors should ensure that collective worship is reviewed as part of the school's self-evaluation process.
- It is a statutory requirement that a school prospectus includes information about the collective worship provided. Such information should advise parents about whether a "determination" relating to worship that is "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" has been made. The parental right to withdraw their children from all or part of the collective worship should be clearly stated together with the arrangements and provision made for those withdrawn. If appropriate, mention should be made of the right of sixth form students to withdraw themselves.

The role of the Collective Worship Co-ordinator or Collective Worship Team

The role of the collective worship co-ordinator or collective worship team will vary depending on the individual needs of the school. In some cases the co-ordinator or the team will be solely responsible for collective worship, but might, at times, involve other members of staff or even visitors or experts in the wider community.

Duties of the co-ordinator or team may include:

- assisting the headteacher and the governors to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to collective worship
- reporting to the headteacher and the governors on matters of concern relating to collective worship
- communicating with members of the school community regarding the significance and content of collective worship
- ensuring that there is a development plan for collective worship which is included in the School Improvement Plan and the Self Evaluation Form
- developing and maintaining effective procedures for planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating collective worship
- being responsive to the needs and views of all members of the school community
- utilising the resources available for collective worship including:
    - books
    - posters
    - websites

visual aids and artefacts
music
visiting speakers
worship leaders.

A school policy for collective worship should include:

- a statement concerning the status of the school (including acknowledgement of the legal requirements, the existence of trust deeds and any guidance or other documentation that derives from the local authority or, if relevant, the Anglican or Catholic diocese)
- a definition or description of collective worship
- the aims of collective worship
- the contribution collective worship can make to the curriculum, and the role of collective worship in the life of the whole school
- the contribution collective worship can make to the cross-curricular themes and dimensions and the SMSC development of pupils
- information about the management of collective worship
- information about planning for collective worship, including the Worship Schedule or Cycle of Themes
- information about the recording, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship
- information about the delivery of collective worship
- information about the right that parents have to withdraw their children from collective worship and, if appropriate, the right of sixth form students to withdraw themselves
- guidelines for visiting speakers.

Schools should use the above sub-headings to help to construct their policy. The policy must be reviewed on a regular basis. The policy must be submitted for approval to the governing body every time it is amended.

Summary of the advice in Circular 1/94

Circular 1/94 was issued to offer non-statutory guidance on legislation concerning Religious Education and Collective Worship. It is not in itself a legal document.

However, sections of the Circular that apply to collective worship contain a number of clear principles and expectations. These are important for schools as they attempt to convert the legal requirements into manageable and effective practice within existing constraints. To ensure schools provide high quality collective worship:

- collective worship must be inclusive
- collective worship should promote a sense of community
- collective worship should enable participants to be actively involved
- collective worship should promote pupils' SMSC development
- collective worship should be a special time
- collective worship should be high quality
- collective worship should provide an opportunity for pupils to worship God/gods

- most acts of collective worship should contain some elements which relate specifically to the traditions of Christian belief and which accord special status to Jesus.

The contribution of collective worship to other aspects of the curriculum

Collective worship can contribute to pupils' SMSC development by encouraging them to:

- reflect on their own beliefs and values and the beliefs and values of others
- reflect on their behaviour
- celebrate together
- learn about their own religious and cultural traditions and the religious and cultural traditions of others.

The contribution of the curriculum to collective worship

It is considered to be sound educational practice to draw from all areas of the curriculum (and not just from RE) in order to provide valuable experiences in collective worship (e.g. from English literature, History, Mathematics, Citizenship Education).

The organisation of collective worship

Collective worship can be organised for pupils in a variety of groupings and can take place in the school hall or classroom.

Planning acts of collective worship

All acts of collective worship should be considered carefully to ensure that the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all the pupils are taken into account. There should be termly planning sheets which identify themes, topics, special events and festivals that will be addressed. There should also be pro-formas for recording, monitoring and evaluation (see Appendices Three, Four and Five for examples of such pro-formas). Such pro-formas will ensure that there is continuity and progression and enable monitoring and evaluation to take place more effectively. This in turn will lead to higher quality collective worship.

The role of collective worship in the life of the school

Collective worship provides an opportunity for the school community to reflect on important issues. It also:

- reinforces a sense of group and community identity
- gives pupils the experience of being still and quiet
- provides an opportunity for celebrating success and times of joy
- provides an opportunity for being together in times of sadness and sorrow
- provides an opportunity for highlighting and reflecting on core human and school values such as truth, justice, respect, personal integrity and accountability
- provides an opportunity to mark significant points in the year such as festivals and important international, national, local and school events.

Collective worship contributes to pupils' spiritual development by providing opportunities to:

- reflect on the value, purpose and meaning of life and our existence
- experience times of quiet and stillness in the midst of the busyness and activity of the school day and school life
- experience ideas, stories and insights from religious and other sources which suggest that there is more to life than the immediate and the material.

Collective worship contributes to pupils' moral development by providing opportunities to:

- reflect on issues of right and wrong
- hear about people in whom goodness, moral awareness and rightness are exemplified
- learn about religious and other teachings concerned with right and wrong.

Collective worship contributes to pupils' social development by providing opportunities to:

- gather with others for a common purpose
- share times of joy and sadness with the school community
- learn how to behave appropriately within a particular social setting.

Collective worship contributes to pupils' cultural development by providing opportunities to:

- hear music and stories from a range of cultures, times and places
- reflect upon ideas concerning beauty and what is pleasing to the eye and the ear
- appreciate the range of talents and gifts found within the school community and wider society.

Collective worship contributes to pupils' intellectual development by providing opportunities to:

- think and to expand their knowledge and understanding
- have ideas, beliefs, preconceptions and prejudices confirmed or challenged
- reflect upon the nature of learning and the value of education.

Advice on providing high quality collective worship

- ✓ Ensure that collective worship meets the legislative requirements, but, more importantly, make collective worship a meaningful and enjoyable experience for the pupils.

- ✓ Ensure that there is a distinction between the assembly and the act of collective worship.

- ✓ The best collective worship is that to which pupils can relate. It speaks to them about issues and topics that are important to them.

- ✓ Collective worship should evoke a response from pupils.

- ✓ Ensure that pupils know the routine for collective worship. Make collective worship special and different to other parts of the school day.

- ✓ Collective worship can take place in large communal spaces such as halls, but also in more intimate surroundings such as classrooms.

- ✓ Create an appropriate atmosphere or mood by using music, shade, light, visual aids and artefacts.

- ✓ Create a positive and reflective atmosphere. Separate out the matters to do with behaviour and notices from the act of collective worship itself.

- ✓ Encourage pupils to understand what the term "collective worship" means. Such understanding might break down some of the resistance harboured by some pupils and staff.

- ✓ Provide opportunities for pupils to participate and encourage them to do so. Worship should not be something that is "done" to them.

- ✓ Remember that all pupils have different learning styles, and those who provide the worship should build in opportunities for all learners no matter their special needs or learning difficulties.

- ✓ If you have an intercom system or interactive whiteboards (IWB), utilise such facilities. Also consider, perhaps in conjunction with such facilities, using a whole school or year group Thought for the Day which, although it might last no more than two or three minutes, can be followed up in class with comment and discussion.

- ✓ Encourage colleagues across the school to contribute to Thoughts for the Day. They need only volunteer for a couple of slots per year. Tailor the theme or topic to suit colleagues' strengths or interests.

- ✓ Use the IWB to pre-record a visiting speaker or film clip to illustrate a particular aspect of belief, faith or moral teaching.

- ✓ Ensure that pupils are invited to contribute to collective worship and Thoughts for the Day. Remember: they can and should prepare and present collective worship.

- ✓ Give pupils variety in the way in which collective worship is presented. ICT can be a very useful tool in gaining pupils' attention and bringing world issues directly to them.

- ✓ Always build in a time for quiet reflection at some point during collective worship. This might be a simple invitation to think about what has been seen and heard. It might be an invitation to join in a prayer or to listen to a poem or short reading.

- ✓ Invite pupils to participate in prayer. Pupils must not be forced to pray, but ensure that those who do not wish to take part respect the rights of those who wish to do so. Pupils not participating should remain silent. Remember that all children will be at differing stages of their spiritual development and that they should feel free to respond and participate in their own way and at their own level.

- ✓ Plan the collective worship schedule well in advance and link it to major world faith festivals. The major Christian seasons and festivals should be included in any such schedule.

- ✓ Visiting speakers will need careful guidelines about what is acceptable and the norm for collective worship in your school. Not everyone feels comfortable standing up to speak to large groups of sometimes restless young people, so any advice will generally be welcomed!

- ✓ As a matter of good practice, insist that colleagues who attend collective worship with their pupils focus on the worship itself and not on checking uniform, detention letters or other sundry activities.

- ✓ Plan, monitor and evaluate collective worship. Involve the staff, governors and pupils. The pupils' voice is a critical part of the evaluation process.

- ✓ At the very least, schools should offer visiting speakers remuneration for travelling expenses.

- ✓ Visitors should be encouraged to provide feedback to the school on their experience of helping to provide collective worship.

Spiritual development

For collective worship to contribute to the spiritual development of pupils it should:

- celebrate all that is good and beautiful and express thankfulness for the joy of being alive
- provide opportunities for pupils to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the darker side of life
- ensure the experiences provided are relevant to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils
- give time for silent reflection and exploration of inner space
- utilise forms of worship that others have found helpful in their spiritual development, e.g. silent contemplation, music, dance, art, architecture, song
- provide a rich variety of forms of expression, e.g. music, art, drama, story, and give pupils an opportunity to experience these at their own level.

Visiting speakers

It is helpful if visitors:

- ✓ are familiar with the school and the pupils through, perhaps, a prior visit
- ✓ are clear about their brief and stick to it
- ✓ have prepared their material thoroughly
- ✓ know where they stand in relationship to other members of their community
- ✓ arrive promptly
- ✓ provide prior notice about the equipment they require
- ✓ are articulate and easily heard, use words and materials appropriate to the ages of the pupils and pause at various points
- ✓ are pupil friendly, e.g. they are not patronising, are aware of the cultural sensitivities of some pupils about touch gestures or eye contact, are visible to all pupils, convey a sense of enjoyment and a sense of humour, and use artefacts and visuals aids
- ✓ are prepared to receive questions from pupils, some of which might be awkward
- ✓ do not use collective worship to influence pupils unfairly or attempt to win them over to their belief or faith stance
- ✓ are aware of the need to challenge negative stereotypes
- ✓ receive feedback from teachers and pupils on positive points about their contribution as well as advice about what might be developed or altered.

Inspecting collective worship

Ofsted inspections include the inspection of collective worship. In community schools, the inspection team will report on whether the school is meeting its legal requirements for ACWs and the contribution of ACWs to the SMSC development of its pupils.

In preparing for inspections a school may wish to consider the following:

- Does the school's ACW policy and practice conform to the legal requirements?
- Is the ACW policy consistent with the school's ethos, values and mission statement/aims and objectives?
- Is there a planned approach to ACWs?
- Do ACWs provide opportunities for spiritual development?
- Is there a clearly understood approach to the diversity of religions and beliefs represented within the school?
- Is a record kept of each ACW?
- Is there a clearly understood approach to the monitoring and evaluation of ACWs?
- Do those responsible for the management and delivery of ACWs have access to relevant training?

Effective collective worship

The inspection team will focus on the quality of the ACW provided. Indicators of effective collective worship include the following:

- The ACW promotes SMSC development and encourages reflection and response.
- The ACW is inclusive and appropriate to all participants.
- The ACW fosters a sense of community, identity and self-esteem.
- Learning opportunities are linked to pupils' own life experiences.
- There is evidence of preparation, planning, effective delivery and evaluation.
- There is appropriate use of resources.
- There is a clear understanding of the distinction between an ACW and an assembly.
- There is evidence that the ACW is special and separate from the everyday activities of the school.

Appendix One
Glossary of Key Terms

Assembly

The legislation relating to ACWs draws a clear distinction between a daily ACW and an assembly. It is a requirement that schools provide a **daily** ACW for all registered pupils in full-time education, except those withdrawn at the wish of their parents or, if sixth form students, withdrawing themselves. An assembly, which need not be daily, is separate and distinctive from an ACW, although there is no reason why it might not immediately precede or follow the ACW. While the ACW involves "worship" in some shape or form, the assembly is devoid of "worship".

Put simply, an assembly is an occasion when information relating to the smooth running of the school is shared with the whole school community. For example, during an assembly the school informs pupils of changes to routine practices or shares information about recent or forthcoming events. Alternatively, the school reports on pupils' successes in lessons, on the sports field or in the wider community. Perhaps the school has collected for a charitable cause. The assembly might be used to inform everyone how successful the exercise has been.

Needless to say, in the right hands an assembly can seamlessly merge into an ACW. A report on a sporting achievement within the school - perhaps the netball team wins a competition - may come under assembly time, but using the pupils' sporting achievement to explore and reflect on human potential, determination and courage could be the stimulus for a "worshipful response" and therefore constitute collective worship.

Some teachers suggest that, if an assembly and an ACW are going to be held one after the other, the assembly, when school notices are given out, should occur at the start rather than at the end of the event. Why? Because this will enable pupils to continue to reflect on the essence of the ACW as they set off to engage in other, more routine, school activities.

It is worth remembering that, although parents can withdraw their children and sixth form students can withdraw themselves from ACWs, all registered pupils in full-time education must attend assemblies.

Collective Worship

"Collective worship" is distinct from "corporate worship" where everyone is committed to a particular faith, as in a church, gurdwara, mandir, mosque, synagogue or temple. "Collective" acknowledges that a school is a community of diverse individuals and beliefs, one in which there are likely to be followers of many faiths as well as people who follow none. "Collective" implies inclusiveness but not necessarily a commitment to any one faith. Nonetheless, the legislation requires that the ACW be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", which some see as conflicting with the common understanding of "collective" in a school context. Moreover, if a narrow understanding of "worship" is applied to the occasion, Buddhists and non-religious pupils and teachers will find themselves engaging in activities that conflict with their beliefs.

The present legislation and subsequent DfEE, DfES and QCA guidance is not very helpful in establishing how schools can square the circle by overcoming the inherent contradiction within the term "collective worship". Consequently, we recommend the following advice as a way of ensuring that "collective worship" is, indeed, inclusive. ACWs should:

- be appropriate for all pupils and others present, whatever their religious commitment or lack of it
- celebrate and affirm difference and diversity within the school community and beyond
- not place any person who attends them in a position where they are made to feel uneasy or less that honest or where their personal integrity is not respected
- not ask any person who attends them to pay lip service to statements of belief which they might not understand or to which they do not subscribe
- be educational experiences and judged on their educational merits.

Corporate Worship

"Corporate worship" describes the nature of worship found within a religious community. During "corporate worship" a body of believers, a "corpus", meets voluntarily and for reasons of shared commitment. They know exactly what the "worship" entails and everyone can join in because of the shared commitment.

Determination

If a school feels that it is inappropriate for ACWs that are "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" to be provided in the case of the school or of a particular category of pupils within it, the headteacher can apply for a "determination", or judgement, from the SACRE to modify the requirements.

When applying for a "determination", the following steps should be taken:

- the headteacher discusses with the staff the school's situation relating to ACWs.

Once agreement about seeking a "determination" is reached:

- the headteacher formally proposes to the governing body that a "determination" be sought from the SACRE.

Once agreement about seeking a "determination" is reached:

- the headteacher and governing body consult with parents.

Once consultation has been completed:

- the headteacher writes to the SACRE seeking a "determination".
- The SACRE notifies the headteacher in writing of its decision.

The SACRE will either grant or deny the application. If granted, a "determination" lasts for five years. A school may re-apply for an extension of the "determination" after the five-year period. The SACRE must take account of all relevant circumstances such as the family backgrounds of the pupils concerned.

Please note that a "determination" does not remove the requirement that collective worship should be **daily**; it merely removes the requirement that the **daily** ACW must be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".

Application forms for a "determination" are available from the Clerk to SACRE, C/o County Hall, and should be sent to the Chair of the SACRE, also C/o County Hall.

Headteachers and governing bodies keen to study advice about a "determination" in further detail should examine sections 6, 7, 9 and 12 of the Education Reform Act, 1988. Paragraphs 69 to 80 of DfEE Circular 1/94 provide a useful interpretation of the legislation.

Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE)

Every local authority must have a SACRE. A SACRE advises the local authority on matters connected with religious worship in community schools and on the RE to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus. Every five years it requires the local authority to review its current agreed syllabus. Also, it must consider and decide whether applications made by a headteacher that the requirement for collective worship in community schools to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" shall not apply to the worship provided for some or all of the pupils in a particular school.

The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship in schools. In particular, a SACRE will examine methods of teaching, the choice of teaching materials and the provision of training.

Withdrawals

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship and sixth form students have the right to withdraw themselves. Parents and sixth form students should make their wishes known, either verbally or in writing, to the headteacher who will ensure that any pupils who are withdrawn are appropriately supervised as the ACW takes place. Schools should be aware that it is improper for pupils who should attend ACWs to miss an ACW merely so they can engage in alternative activities.

Worship

The term "worship" is not defined in the present legislation so we do not know exactly what it is that those who drafted the legislation had in mind when they required schools to provide a daily act of collective "worship". This said, the word "worship" derives from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning to attribute "worth" or "worthship". It has the same root as the word "worthy". The most obvious meaning of the word "worship" is that of paying homage to a divine power or being. Religious communities "worship" God or gods in whatever form their tradition demands. However, "worship" can also refer to the celebration of, honour paid to, or service offered to, individuals or things people consider worthy. In our own day, for good or ill, people have been known to "worship" pop groups, football teams, political leaders, money, fame and power.

Worship may take many forms including music, song, dance, drama, prayers, readings, silence, meditation, contemplation of icons and symbols, passing on of one's beliefs and the lighting of candles and lamps. These actions may originate in the actions of religious communities but they have their parallels in various secular domains (e.g. during a typical football match on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon).

Appendix Two
Suggested Themes for ACWs

- Achievement
- Good news
- Adventure
- Messages
- Aggression and hate
- Obedience
- All things new
- Fame
- Ambitions
- Obstacles
- Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer
- Hope
- Barriers
- Poetry
- Beauty
- Riches
- Beginnings and endings
- Communion
- Blindness and sight
- Science
- Bravery
- Symbols
- Bridges
- Success and failure
- Building relationships
- Personal qualities
- Care and caring
- People I have met
- Celebration
- Listening
- Change
- Rewards
- Charity
- Voices
- Children
- Treasures
- Choices and decisions
- Faith
- Courage and bravery
- Health
- Creation
- Imagination
- Emotions
- Talents

- The environment and stewardship
- Hobbies
- Families
- Citizenship
- Forgiveness
- Dreams
- Friends
- Influences
- Gifts and giving
- Democracy
- Growth
- Humour
- Light and darkness
- Roots
- Memories
- Language
- Moving on
- Humility
- One world
- Fantasy
- Peace
- Education
- Promises
- Life and death
- Thank you for….
- Sacrifice
- Truth and justice
- Leave taking

Suggested Festivals on which to base ACWs
Key Christian Festivals

- The season of Advent
- Christmas
- Epiphany
- The season of Lent
- Holy Week
- Easter
- Ascension
- Whit Sunday
- Harvest

Key Festivals from the main World Religions other than Christianity

- Wesak (Buddhism)
- Holi (Hinduism)
- Diwali (Hinduism)

- Al-Hijra (Islam)
- Ashura (Islam)
- Ramadan (Islam)
- Eid-ul-Fitr (Islam)
- Eid-ul-Adha (Islam)
- Purim (Judaism)
- Pesach (Judaism)
- Shavuot (Judaism)
- Rosh Hashanah (Judaism)
- Yom Kippur (Judaism)
- Succot (Judaism)
- Hanukkah (Judaism)
- Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikhism)
- Baisakhi (Sikhism)
- Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Sikhism)
- Birthday of Guru Nanak (Sikhism)

Some other national and international events that might form the basis for an ACW

- Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January)
- Chinese New Year (late January to late February)
- Darwin's Birthday (12th February)
- St. David's Day (1st March)
- Women's World Day of Prayer (early March)
- Commonwealth Day (early to mid March)
- International Women's Day (8th March)
- St. Patrick's Day (17th March)
- Mothering Sunday (March)
- St. George's Day (23rd April)
- World Red Cross Day (8th May)
- Father's Day (early to mid May)
- Christian Aid Week (mid May)
- International Humanist Day (21st June)
- International Day of Peace (21st September)
- Black History Month (October)
- International Day of Older Persons (1st October)
- World Animal Day (4th October)
- World Mental Health Day (10th October)
- National Anti-racism Week of Action in Football (mid to late October)
- United Nations Day (24th October)
- Hallowe'en (31st October)
- Anniversary of Guy Fawkes' Gun Powder Plot (5th November)
- Armistice Day (11th November)
- Remembrance Sunday (early November)
- International Day for Tolerance (16th November)
- BBC Children in Need (mid to late November)

- Anti-Bullying Week (late November)
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25th November)
- St. Andrew's Day (30th November)
- Human Rights Day (10th December)

Appendix Six
Towards a Collective Worship Policy: suggestions for content

Rationale
Collective Worship at Shanklea Primary School takes place daily in accordance with the provisions of the Education Reform Act, 1988. The content of all our acts of collective worship is in accordance with the aims of the school.

The governors and headteacher have prepared this policy with assistance from the teacher co-ordinating collective worship.

Aims
We aim to provide collective worship that provides pupils with the opportunity to:

- worship that which is considered worthy
- consider spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues
- explore their own beliefs
- develop their spirituality
- develop a community spirit
- reinforce positive attitudes
- participate and respond
- promote a common ethos and shared values
- develop respect and sensitivity for the beliefs and values of others

Definition of Collective Worship
Collective worship is the time set aside from other aspects of school life when pupils are given the opportunity to learn about and reflect on a variety of issues which may evoke in them a worshipful or spiritual response.

The contribution of Collective Worship to aspects of the curriculum
Collective worship can contribute to the SMSC development of pupils through:

reflection on their own beliefs and values and the beliefs and values of others
influencing behaviour
celebrating together
the celebration of their own religious and cultural traditions and the religious and cultural traditions of others
providing different perspectives on aspects of life, promoting thinking skills and understanding, and encouraging further research.

Management of Acts of Collective Worship
Management of collective worship will take place through the worship team comprising of the collective worship co-ordinator, the headteacher, governors and representatives of the different year groups.

Organisation
Collective worship is organised for a variety of groupings (e.g. year groups, key stage groups, tutor groups) and will take place in the school hall, in classrooms or in other suitable areas of the school.
Collective worship takes place on a daily basis for all year groups either in a whole school, a year group or a class group (insert details particular to the school and attach a copy of the Acts of Collective Worship Schedule/Rota, perhaps as an appendix).

Acts of collective worship will usually last 20 minutes, although it is recognised that the time might be extended or reduced, as appropriate.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship
All acts of collective worship will be carefully planned to take into account the needs, ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of the pupils. A termly (or annual) Schedule/Rota of Act of Collective Worship Themes will be drawn up with a different theme each week. The schedule/rota will include religious festivals and events of a national or international nature, but will be flexible enough to accommodate topical issues and current affairs. The schedule/rota will indicate who within the school will deliver each act of collective worship and include opportunities for collective worship to be led by visiting speakers.

Monitoring and evaluation of Acts of Collective Worship
Regular monitoring and evaluation of acts of collective worship will be undertaken by the Headteacher, Year Leaders, link governors and/or school council members.

Feedback will inform practice and assist decision-making in relation to the themes chosen and issues to do with delivery, visiting speakers and pupil participation. Good practice will be disseminated across the school community and to help plan the schedule/rota for the following term/year.

Withdrawal of pupils from collective worship
In accordance with legal requirements, parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship (if appropriate, mention the right of sixth form students to withdraw themselves). Parents should make their wishes known to the headteacher who will ensure that any pupils who are withdrawn are appropriately supervised while the act of collective worship takes place.

Note: Pupils not in the sixth form can be withdrawn wholly or partly from acts of collective worship only by their parents. Parents must make this request to the headteacher verbally or in writing.

Planning

Ideas for themes for worship are included in Appendix Two. Visitors will be invited to help deliver collective worship (see Visiting speakers above).

Resources
Describe what resources are available for collective worship and explain where they are stored/how they can be accessed. Have a plan for regularly up-dating/adding to the resources.

Monitoring
The collective worship team will ensure that the acts of collective worship fulfil the legal requirements and maintain the spirit of the law. In particular, collective worship will:

- be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character while ensuring that other world religions are considered and valued
- contribute to the SMSC development of all pupils
- draw on all areas of the curriculum as well as contribute to the curriculum.

Evaluation
Members of the worship team will ask for regular verbal and written comments from pupils, staff and visitors.

- The views of pupils and staff will be sought and collated on a termly basis to help enhance the delivery of collective worship and to improve the collective worship schedule/rota.
- Visitors will be asked for feedback on their experience of delivering collective worship in school.

Appendix Seven
Resources

Nowadays, there is no shortage of resources to help teachers deliver excellent ACWs. We suggest that everyone's starting point for examining such resources should be:

North East Religious Learning Resources Centre,
Church House,
St. John's Terrace,
Percy Main,
NE29 6HS.
Tel. no. 0191-270-4161.

Staff at the Centre do not mind if you arrange a visit to critically evaluate the many resources they possess. However, once the resource bank has been examined, responsible schools will seek to pay the small annual subscription which allows access to approximately 38,000 loanable items relating to both RE and ACWs. The Centre also has an informative website: www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk

Other useful websites with lots of advice and practical guidance relating to ACWs include:

www.assemblingcitizens.co.uk
www.assemblies.org.uk
www.culham.ac.uk/cw
www.natsoc.org.uk
www.prayingeachday.org/
www.reonline.org.uk
wwwretoday.org.uk
www.schoolassemblies.btinternet.co.uk
www.stapleford-centre.org/

It is also suggested that contact be made with the British Humanist Association (BHA), 1 Gower Street, London, WC1E 6HD, because excellent advice has been issued about assemblies, ACWs generally and inclusive ACWs in particular. Useful information about ACWs also exists on the BMA website: www.humanism.org.uk/site/cms/

Another invaluable website is that of Norfolk County Council. The pages about collective worship address in a thoughtful manner some of the latest thinking relating to ACWs before discussing useful resources and inspection issues. Contact the relevant pages via: www.norfolk.gov.uk

For those who prefer books, the following titles are recommended:

Key Stages 1 and 2:
Assemblies for Infants, Books 1, 2 and 3, Diane Walker, RMEP, 2002.
Assembly Chains, Diane Walker, Lion, 2003.
Cracking Assemblies, Books 1 and 2, Margaret Cooling, Stapleford Centre, 2001.

Key Stages 2 and 3:
Ready-made Assemblies about Famous People, Tony Dobinson, Scripture Union, 2002.
Getting to Know Me, Louis Gill, Nash Pollock, 2004.

Key Stages 3, 4 and 5:
A School Book of Days, Tony Maw, Heinemann, 2001.
Values for Today, Chris Wright, Heinemann, 2001.
Active Readings for Assemblies, Peter Norton, Heinemann, 2000.

Key Stages 4 and 5:
From Now to Eternity, Margaret Laird, RMEP, 2000.

Many ACWs take as their theme an important festival, celebration, commemoration or season associated with a religious tradition. However, the dates for many such festivals, celebrations, commemorations and seasons change from year to year. To ensure your ACWs occur at roughly the correct date, access The Shap Working Party's "Calendar of Religious Festivals", copies of which can be purchased from The Shap Working Party, PO Box 38580, London, SW1P 3XF. The calendar, published every 18 months, lists and briefly describes all

major and many minor festivals, celebrations, commemorations and seasons in the world's major faiths.

These are just some of the better books that have been published in recent years. All the good publishing houses have useful collections nowadays, but it is interesting how often they call their collections "assemblies" rather than "acts of collective worship"! It is as if the distinction between ACWs and assemblies still has not been fully grasped.

Lastly, do not forget that visitors can be very helpful in relation to delivering all or part of an ACW. Many schools will already have the names and contact details of reliable people who can make such contributions. For additional ideas and points of contact, please examine the "Some places to visit" sub-section under "Resources" in the Agreed Syllabus for RE. As you know, this is to be found in the Non-Statutory Guidance that concludes the syllabus. Alternatively, make contact with SACRE via the Clerk to SACRE at County Hall. SACRE members have additional ideas about useful visitors.

