



**AREIAC**

The Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants

# Collective Worship Revisited

**A paper for all who are  
or *should* be  
interested in collective worship**

*"This thought for the day is good, Sir - can we have another  
for afternoon registration?"*

Year 7 pupil  
at Baverstock Foundation School and Specialist Sports College, Birmingham

## **Introduction**

This document is intended for those who have, or *should* have, an interest in collective worship, from whatever perspective. It aims to inform and to inspire. It clarifies the legal requirements, identifies the obstacles, considers the potential benefits, exemplifies good practice, and sets out some recommendations for practitioners and policy-makers.

This work has been undertaken on behalf of The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and The Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC), two organisations whose members share deep concerns about the increasingly widespread disregard for collective worship in schools.

## **Context**

Under the heading *State schools not providing group worship*, a survey for BBC local radio in September 2011 reported '64% of the 500 parents questioned said their child did not attend daily acts of collective worship and 60% of the 1,743 adults asked said the legislation should not be enforced'. Notwithstanding the limited scope of the sample and the possible misunderstanding among those questioned at the use of the term 'collective worship' rather than the more commonly used 'assembly', these findings confirm a trend, well understood by professionals and SACREs. Many schools fail to fulfil the legal requirements in full and an increasing number, particularly secondary schools, ignore them altogether. This is to be regretted since it not only makes a mockery of the law, it also deprives pupils of opportunities not otherwise open to them.

## **Legal requirements**

The place of collective worship in schools is upheld by statute and has been so since 1944. The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) affirmed its statutory position, albeit some of the earlier prescription to do with grouping and timing was relaxed, confirming what had become widespread practice in schools. The subsequent 1996 Education Act further confirmed the requirements, since when there has been no change to this primary legislation, by which duty schools remain bound.

**The basic requirement is that all registered pupils shall take part in an act of collective worship every day.** (ERA 6.1) There are only two exceptions to this: parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship and pupils in school sixth forms are permitted to decide for themselves whether to attend or not.

The ERA stipulates collective worship must be '*wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*'; it is deemed to be fulfilling this description if it '*reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief, without being distinctive of any Christian denomination*'. (ERA 7: 1-3)

Since 1988, acts of collective worship may take place in a whole school group or in any other pre-existing grouping in the school. It may take place at any time in the school day, although it should be on the school premises. It must be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils. The duty to provide collective worship in schools rests with the head teacher and governors, the prime responsibility differing according to type of school. The school's policy and the arrangements for collective worship must be documented and available. (Education Regulations, 1981)

The duty to offer daily collective worship is laid on every school. The legal framework applies to all local authority maintained schools, except those with a religious character where collective worship is delivered according to the trust deed and usually reflects the faith or denomination of the foundation. Provision in Free Schools and Academies is determined by the school's funding agreement. None of this legislation applies to special schools. It is only those schools in the first category which fall within the remit of the local SACRE in respect of collective worship.

### **Modifications to the law**

Where it is felt, for religious reasons, collective worship that *'reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief'* is not appropriate for its pupils, a school can apply for a determination. The procedure does not lift the duty to provide collective worship; it allows for the requirement that collective worship should be *'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'* to be lifted in respect of some or all of the pupils in the school for whom such is deemed inappropriate.

Applications for determinations are made to the relevant body by the head teacher after consultation with parents and the school's governing body. Traditionally it has been a function of the SACRE to receive and 'determine' whether such requests are valid, either granting or refusing them and this still applies in the case of community schools without a religious character. The body now responsible for performing this function for Free Schools and Academies is the Education Funding Agency (EFA). All determinations last for five years.

### **Obstacles to success**

There are many potential obstacles to the provision of worthwhile collective worship. Nationally there are groups with fiercely exclusive views, polarising argument between the need for greater secularisation on one hand and the re-Christianising of society on the other. Hazards in school range from philosophical objection to blatant disregard on the part of many school leaders and governors; pressure to meet targets through a loaded curriculum and the exclusion of collective worship from curriculum time; scant regard for or, in some cases, denial of the potential benefits to pupils and the growth of the school community; superficial understanding of the requirements of the law, coupled with an unwillingness to devote time to proper planning and resourcing of collective worship, including training for staff; confusion between legal requirements and government advice and simply habit, as non-compliance becomes the norm.

In its early days, Ofsted reported non-compliance in the provision of collective worship, robustly startling some, though not all, leadership teams into taking the matter seriously. When they were able, strong local authority advisory teams challenged recalcitrant head teachers and the most proactive SACREs produced guidance and materials to mark out the territory and support the development of good practice. Some of that still goes on.

Over the years, one of the most significant stumbling blocks to success has been the now infamous Circular 1/94. This guidance was issued in 1994 by the then Department for Education, under the minister, John Patten, a devout Roman Catholic who had been educated by Jesuits. The 'advice' was uncompromising and unequivocal. Some of the confusion around the new legislation, by then six years old, was clarified but the consequences were disastrous. With its narrow interpretation of the law, it was controversial from the start, and its shadow has lengthened over recent times, particularly since the revision in 2010 of the sections of the circular dealing with religious education. Collective worship was consequently left in limbo, with misleading advice retained in a document long since obsolete.

### **Working within the law**

In giving due regard to the law, it is worth examining precisely what it demands. The Act consistently avoids describing school worship as Christian; it is evidently not intended to be interpreted as Christian worship in any conventional sense despite Circular 1/94's spurious injunction that *'it must...accord a special status to Jesus Christ'*. Furthermore, the use of the adjective 'collective' clearly delineates this activity from preconceived notions of worship, normally the voluntary response of a corporate body of believers. Collective worship is unique and different, though the subtlety of this distinction is not universally appreciated.

The legal definition of collective worship is broad. It offers freedom. First there is an alternative: it can be *'wholly or mainly...'*, therefore collective worship does not have to be all *'of a broadly Christian character'*. Indeed, the Act specifies that *'every act of collective worship required by section 6...need not comply'* with this description; there is opportunity here for variety and breadth. Every-pupil-every-day is the non-negotiable. Secondly, collective worship must *'reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief'*; that is to say, it is broad rather than specific or exclusive, reflecting plurality and focusing, not on doctrine or traditions of worship, but on *belief* that is broadly Christian.

Such forensic attention to semantics seems unnecessarily pedantic to some, but once the scope of these freedoms is realised, an imaginative interpretation of the law is possible. It allows for creativity in planning worthwhile experiences, outside the formal curriculum structure, which are suitable for all in the school community. These will be inclusive, participative, challenging and educational, drawing on a wide range of religious traditions, without any danger of indoctrinating anyone or compromising the religious, or non-religious, backgrounds of pupils (and staff), whilst giving those for whom it is appropriate the opportunity to worship God.

### **Potential benefits**

This legislation sits under the overall purpose of the curriculum, as set out in the 1988 ERA, to:

- a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society;
- b) and prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

This is a startlingly challenging duty placed on schools. Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, as it has become known, is about the nurture of them as human beings and, as such, is the most important job a school is charged with fulfilling. Doing the same for society is mind blowing. It is a shared responsibility involving the whole school and the whole curriculum, yet it is often misunderstood or given scant regard. Over the past

decade, an agenda of pressured change and the need to respond to the standards' imperative has diminished many schools' recognition of these dimensions, if indeed it was ever there. Ofsted's re-sharpened focus on SMSC in the 2011 Framework for the inspection of schools is welcome and may serve to revitalise schools' awareness of the importance of these dimensions.

Of the terms in use to describe these aspects of an individual's development, the word 'spiritual' causes the greatest unease in schools. Much misunderstood, it conjures up for many images of a variety of religious practice, giving the impression the word 'spirituality' is synonymous with religion. It is not. Religious faith is an *expression* of spirituality. In this educational context, spiritual development is used more broadly to describe nurturing the spiritual dimension of every human being, in recognition of the uniqueness of the individual and her or his humanity and potential. It is about helping pupils to develop the capacity to transcend the limitations of the physical world; to lift their horizons beyond the materialistic; to be creative; to consider ultimate questions about the meaning of life in general and their own lives in particular; to develop positive attitudes; to have hope. It goes further than what the child knows, understands and can do...to what the child is and is becoming.

What is frequently not realised is what a golden opportunity for supporting this development can be found in collective worship. It can make values explicit for pupils, challenge their thinking, extend their emotional repertoire, help them to know and celebrate who they are and understand what the school community stands for and aspires to.

Where a school follows a carefully planned programme of collective worship, productive links can be made with the curriculum especially, but not exclusively, religious education; in this way pupils can be invited to transfer their learning into another context and share it with their peers. Crucially the distinction between RE and collective worship must be understood by the school and neither used as a substitute for the other. For everyone in the school to be exploring aspects of the same theme in various settings can create a buzz of interaction between pupils of all ages as well as in class or tutor groups and add to a feeling of shared community.

To achieve all this, first and foremost, collective worship must be educational; it must be properly and carefully planned; it should be relevant and engaging, with a sense of occasion and atmosphere; it must be more than 'assembly', despite the common usage of that term which means simply 'coming together for a purpose'; it must be treated as time set aside, offering a few moments in a increasingly frantic school day for reflection and, to be successful, it must be valued. When all this is taken seriously, it is possible for a school to evaluate the impact of a week's (or longer) programme of collective worship in terms of potential benefits to pupils' SMSC development and to the growth of a coherent school community. Pupils can be invited to contribute to this evaluation, adding their own feedback on individual acts of collective worship or whole themes.

### **Making it worship**

Although it is now commonly accepted that 'worship' in the school context is different from the activity of a faith community, nevertheless the use of the word 'worship' is anathema to many. Even more so is the thought of pupils actively being encouraged to worship in a school context other than where there is a religious foundation, and even that causes bristling in some circles.

One of the few benefits of the Circular's advice is the clear statement that 'collective worship should aim to provide an opportunity for pupils to worship God...' The key word is *opportunity*. There is no compulsion in that statement, rather an injunction to the school to ensure that there is an open invitation to pupils to make more of the moment if it is appropriate and they feel comfortable doing so. It should be made clear this is not an expectation.

There is no assumption in the legislation that any of the traditional elements of Christian worship should be included, although it is common practice to have some stimulus material such as a story, perhaps singing - especially in a primary school - and some time for purposeful reflection. In practice, the most appropriate opportunity for worship comes in the quiet reflective time when a thought that is being shared with everyone includes an invitation to pray, for those who want to do so. Alternatively, everyone can be invited to listen to the words of a religious prayer as long as it is rooted in the tradition from which it comes, or pupils might be encouraged to read their own prayers. Whatever the words that are used, the emphasis is on sharing them in a focused way and inviting appropriate responses according to individual needs, in an atmosphere of openness.

### **Good practice**

The collective worship experience should therefore be inclusive; it should exclude no one and be appropriate for all. It should involve everyone present to some degree, inviting thoughtful reflection and giving the opportunity for response. It should take a variety of forms to inspire and hold pupils' interest. It should challenge pupils to think beyond their own lives and broaden their perspectives. It is time set aside from the rest of the day and should have an atmosphere that is different. Most importantly, it should have an evident educational purpose. It should be planned to nurture pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Below are some examples.

### **Collective worship in school:**

**Example A:** In a primary school:

Theme for the week: *'Working Together'*

Context: a mixture of whole school; classrooms and key stage groups;

Monday: Collective worship with the whole school in the hall, led by the head teacher:

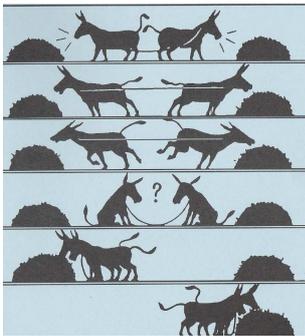
Children gather to the strains of the song *'I'd like to teach the world to sing...'*

The Head teacher engages children with the words, asking what they think the writer of the song hoped for and what the phrase *'perfect harmony'* means.

She tells them she has something to show them and reveals the drawing of two struggling donkeys and invites them to talk about it in pairs... She gathers their ideas and there is a discussion with the children about what the donkeys learned.

*Words for worship:*

*'Perhaps you would like to be very quiet for a moment and think about a time when you've been like one of those donkeys – when you've worked against someone to get your own way; we all behave like that sometimes. Think about what you could have done in that situation and, if you want to, you can say your own prayer, asking God to help you to be less selfish.'*



(Co-operation is better than conflict from Quaker Peace and Service)

And for the rest of the week:

**Tuesday** (in classrooms): *How can we work together?* Story of the hungry stomach; Being like a body (I Corinthians 12);

**Wednesday** (in key stage groups): *Becoming strong together* demonstrating with attempts to tear a telephone directory and telling the traditional *Jataka* story of the birds (Buddhist);

**Thursday** (in classrooms): *When working together made a difference*: the story of Rosa Parks and the bus boycott in Atlanta;

**Friday** (whole school): *Making a difference now*: the Jubilee ‘Drop the Debt’ campaign and world leaders’ summit.

Song, eg: ‘A Better World’ No 60 in Gadsby & Hoggarth, *Alleluya* A & C Black

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**Potential contributions to pupils’ SMSC development:**

The theme ‘*Working Together*’ encourages primary children to:

- remember they do not live in isolation but that the human condition is shared;
- think of others before themselves; (spiritual)
- understand that they have a responsibility towards others;
- discuss ways in which they can promote the common good; (moral)
- consider their own behaviour towards other people;
- appreciate the benefits of co-operation;
- evaluate the impact of shared actions on world events; (social)
- understand that a ‘culture’ of co-operation is preferable to one of conflict;
- become aware of the damaging effect of one culture’s supremacy over others. (cultural)

**Example B:** In a primary school

Theme for the week: *Threads*

Context: a mixture of whole school; classrooms and key stage groups;

	Activity:	Focus:	Words for worship:
Monday whole school	Pass a strong thread through the hands of everyone in the hall, encouraging quiet concentration on the thread itself. Allow time for this activity while listening to (or singing) an appropriate song, eg: <i>Bind us Together</i> . Talk about what the thread symbolises and how it feels to be joined by it. Invite children to suggest other ways in which they are ‘joined’ together in school.	Threads of community	<i>Look at the thread in your hands, joining you to everyone else here; think quietly about the words of the song and the invisible threads that bind us all together.</i>

Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the story of a little girl who helps her grandmother to make a quilt. (eg: Flourney V. <i>The Patchwork Quilt</i> Picture Puffins ISBN 0 14 050641 1) Draw out ideas about the threads of a person's history through memory and tradition.	Threads through my history	<i>I'd like to invite you to think back as far as you can. Think of someone you love who joins you to the past.</i>  <i>If you would like to, say thank you to God for all these memories and the person who helped to create them.</i>
Wednesday Key stage groups	Talk about how we want to remember people we love who have died. Use a story of loss to talk about the joy of memory as a link to the past (eg: Varley S. <i>Badger's Parting Gift</i> Harper Collins, ISBN: 0-688-11518-7) or introduce the idea of a quilt to help remembering: ( <a href="http://www.lynnsettington.co.uk/world-aids-day-quilt">http://www.lynnsettington.co.uk/world-aids-day-quilt</a> )	Threads of loving	<i>Adam has a prayer to share with us this morning; let's be quiet and listen: Please God, look after my Grandad who has just died and my Nana who is sad. Amen</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Talk about friendship bands and why they are given and worn. Set up an activity in which every pupil makes a simple band, either of thread or card. Invite children to sit in a friendship circle and put their band onto the wrist of the person next to them, saying the words for worship.	Threads of friendship	<i>This is to help you remember I want to be your friend. Help me to be your friend.</i>
Friday whole school	Remind everyone of the thread that joined them all together on Monday. Talk about the idea of a sacred thread, joining the person to God and show pictures of Hindus wearing their sacred threads across the chest. Explain how they are made and invite pupils to think about the three strands of their lives that they would want to plait together if they had such a thread.	Sacred threads	<i>A famous priest, John Henry Newman said, 'I am a link in a chain, a bond of connections between persons'.</i>  <i>Think about how you are a link in a chain.</i>  <i>If you want to, you can think about the threads that join you to God.</i>

### Potential contributions to pupils' SMSC development:

The theme *Threads* encourages children to:

- explore various 'threads' as metaphors for relationships;
- understand that they are joined by many threads;
- reflect on the strength of the invisible threads that help to make them who they are;
- think about those people they love, especially those who have died; (spiritual)
- remember it is good to think of others and to want to be friendly;
- challenge their thinking about friendship and what it means; (moral)
- understand that relationships bind people together;
- appreciate relational 'threads' across generations;
- recognise that everyone in the school belongs together; (social)
- appreciate how 'threads' help to cross boundaries of time and culture. (cultural)

**Example C:** In a secondary school

Theme for the week: *Planting for the Future*

Context: year group gathering once a week and tutor group collective worship on all other days;

Photograph of an old olive tree used as focus for each day

**Monday:** Planting for the future; origins of the Jewish festival of trees, Tu B'Shevat;

What do you 'plant' for the future?

**Tuesday:** A Personal Memory: The National Trust, founded in 1895 with its oak leaf symbol;

Is the past as important as the future? Why?

Why are symbols like the leaf important? What do they signify?

**Wednesday:** A Fruitful World: Talmud story of the Rabbi and the old man, planting a fruit tree, even though he would never taste its fruit;

How good are you at waiting? What is the best way of thanking the people of the past whom you will never meet?

**Thursday:** Here today, gone tomorrow; if the world were to end tomorrow, what would you do today? Thinking about being responsible to and for others; focusing on ways to serve.

**Friday:** A Legacy: what is the greatest gift you've been given? What makes life worth living? What would you like to give to the world for the future? If the world *were* to end tomorrow, what would you do today? Pupils invited to write their ideas on a leaf shape and pin on a tree image.

*Words for worship* (used every day):

A famous Christian hymn writer, Fred Kaan, asks this question in one of his hymns:

*'...Were the world to end tomorrow*

*Would we plant a tree today?'*

In a moment of silence, think about your response to those words...



**Potential contributions to pupils' SMSC development:**

The theme '*Planting for the Future*' encourages secondary pupils to:

- contemplate their own sense of transience in a fleeting world; (spiritual)
- reflect on the responsibilities they have as trustees of the future; (moral)
- develop a critique of modern society's reliance on instant gratification; (social)
- appreciate there is more to life than money;
- appreciate that both individual and collective responses to issues of culture evolve and change and are often in tension. (cultural)

**Example D:** In a secondary school

Theme for the week: *Do unto others...*

Context: a year group gathering once during the week and tutor group collective worship on the other four days;

	Material	Questions	Words for worship
Monday <i>One legged wisdom</i>	A famous Jewish teacher called Rabbi Hillel was once challenged by a Gentile to sum up the whole of Jewish teaching as set out in the Torah. And to do so while standing on one leg! He replied, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation. Go and learn". These ancient words have become known as The Golden Rule and they are found in the sacred writings of most religions.	What would your golden rule be?  Why are some words so long remembered?	<i>Rabbi Hillel also said, "If I am only for myself, what am I?" Stop and ask yourself, If a person is only for her or himself, what is that person doing with life?'</i>
Tuesday <i>Wesak</i>	For many Buddhists, Wesak is the most important festival of the year. It is the time when they celebrate the life of the Buddha who rejected his wealthy lifestyle to search for the truth about big questions like suffering. When he found his answers he became enlightened. Buddha taught that being kind and generous to others is important; it is good to give hospitality to anyone, whoever they are.	Whose teaching do you follow?  Where do you find answers to really big questions?	<i>'A generous heart, kind speech and compassion are the things which renew humanity.'</i> Saying of the Buddha
Wed'day <i>Loving the enemy</i>	The Guru led a strong army in battle and when the fighting was over, there were many dead and injured on the battlefield. The Guru sent a group of his men out to tend the injured. As he watched, he saw Bhai Ghanaya, a water carrier, tending enemy soldiers as well as his own. He summoned him and demanded to know what he was doing. Bhai Ghanaya answered, "Master, when I gave out water I did not see friends or enemies. I saw only the wounded." The Guru was deeply moved by these words and told him he was indeed a true Sikh.	What does this story tell you about what a 'true Sikh' might be?	<i>'One potter has fashioned all the pots. One light pervades all creation.'</i> Guru Granth Sahib
Thursday <i>Love one another</i>	On the night before he was killed, Jesus had a farewell meal with his friends. He showed them how they were to remember him and gave them new rules for living. "A new commandment I give to you," he said to them, "that you love one another as I have loved you." To show what he meant, Jesus had already washed their feet like a servant. They did not understand but they realised something was going to change. "By this, he went on, "people will know you are my disciples." And that would be important one day...	How do people know who you are?  How would you like to be remembered?	<i>Jesus taught, "Love one another as I have loved you..."</i>
Friday <i>Wisdom for the world</i>	The first person to formulate what we call the Golden Rule was probably the Chinese sage Confucius, 2500 years ago. When asked what his followers should practise he gave them the instruction: 'Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.' This idea, more often a positive statement, is at the heart of all these religious stories. It is wisdom that has survived the centuries and it is the essence of compassion. It is not exclusively a religious idea however. It is shared by many people all over the world. Just think how wonderful it would be if absolutely everyone were really compassionate...	What could you learn about yourself from these religious stories?  How could you change the world?	<i>Always do to others as you would like them to do to you...</i>  <i>Be quiet for a moment and think what those words mean to you. You can make your thoughts into a prayer if you want to.</i>

### **Potential contributions to pupils' SMSC development:**

The theme '*Do unto others...*' encourages secondary pupils to:

- appreciate the universal nature of some religious teaching;
- see the potential benefit of compassion;
- find wisdom in very ordinary ideas;
- imagine they could change the world for the better; (spiritual)
- contemplate the implications and benefits of putting others first;
- challenge their own treatment of people they do not know or like; (moral)
- think critically about their relationships with others;
- realise the importance of empathising with others; (social)
- understand that some teaching crosses religious and cultural boundaries. (cultural)

### **Conclusions**

There are misconceptions about the nature and purpose of collective worship in schools. Some see in it an opportunity to enshrine traditional Christian worship in our schools, and want the law reinforced, while others consider this to be a violation of human rights since it imposes Christianity on children of all faiths and none, and they want it repealed. Neither view is appropriate. The purpose of collective worship in the twenty-first century is to help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; with the exception of schools with a religious character, this is the only justification for collective worship and the task is so important that it needs to be done well.

A middle way can and should be found which would benefit all schools and all pupils, regardless of their background, which would help to define and strengthen a school's ethos and support the purposes of education. This middle way emphasises the spirit of the law over the letter. There is no need to change the law as it stands; the obstacle to educational collective worship is the wording of Circular 1/94 which urgently needs to be removed.

### **To summarise, collective worship:**

- is collective and educational rather than corporate and religiously devotional;
- offers opportunities to pupils that are different from other learning experiences;
- promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, encouraging them to know themselves and live for others;
- creates opportunities for pupils to consider their own beliefs and values, both religious and secular;
- encourages a reflective approach to living and deepens every individual's capacity for emotional response;
- helps pupils to consider what it means to be human;
- offers a school opportunities to articulate its shared values and build a sense of community;
- should draw on a rich variety of religious and spiritual sources, reflecting diversity whilst recognising the significance of Christianity;
- can include elements of conventional worship, if used appropriately, including prayer, music, drama, but does not have to do so; however, time for reflection enhances the potential for SMSC development;
- should interest and inspire young people, whether from religious backgrounds or not;
- should not undermine or compromise the values of the family from which the child comes;
- should not be actively intended to promote religious faith or commitment.

**Best practice in provision of collective worship depends on:**

- a commitment from senior leaders to the value of collective worship;
- thorough planning to meet the needs of the particular school and its pupils and community;
- educational use of religious and other material, ensuring variety in its form and presentation;
- an open approach that gives pupils opportunities to respond without compromising them in any way;
- taking advantage of the freedom to provide collective worship at any time of day and in any school group;
- taking every opportunity to interest and inspire pupils.

**Recommendations**

1. Circular 1/94 should be revoked by the Department for Education (DfE) immediately;
2. SACREs should be empowered to monitor the quality of collective worship in their schools;
3. Schools should be encouraged, through inspection arrangements, to provide worthwhile collective worship for every pupil every day;
4. Students in Initial Teacher Training should be equipped to understand the importance of SMSC development and the nature and purposes of collective worship, in order to be able to make a worthwhile contribution to both during their careers.

**Postscript**

The latest official word on the status of collective worship comes from the Department for Education (DfE), dated April 13<sup>th</sup> 2012, in response to a joint letter from NASACRE and AREIAC requesting the removal of Circular 1/94: 'The Government believes that the requirement for collective worship in schools and Academies encourages pupils to reflect on the concept of belief and the role it plays in the traditions and values of this country. We have no plans to change the current requirements for the daily act of collective worship... The law is both inclusive and flexible in allowing schools to tailor their provision to suit their pupils' needs and it provides a unique opportunity for schools to develop and celebrate the school's or Academy's ethos and values. We note your points regarding Circular 1/94...'

Julie Grove  
April 2012

**Footnote:**

The four examples of collective worship activities outlined above are all taken from Solihull SACRE publications and are used with permission:

*Thoughts for the Day: Tutor Group Collective Worship in the Secondary School* 1995;  
*Promoting Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development through Collective Worship in the Primary School* 2001.