**Monitoring and Evaluation of Collective Worship**

Monitoring of worship and evaluation can be a fraught topic as there has been limited material available to monitor and *evaluate* worship similar to those which are those used for monitoring teaching[[1]](#footnote-1). This has led to two variant ways of evaluating worship:

* Firstly, to use the criteria that are available for monitoring quality of teaching and learning or
* Secondly, to provide a very descriptive account of acts of worship.

Using criteria for teaching and learning is inappropriate as none of the normal controls found in a teaching group are present, and those taking the worship (e.g. the Vicar) may well be completely oblivious of these criteria. To provide a description of an act of worship does nothing more than give a ‘live’ version of the planning. There may be comments about behaviour and perhaps quality of delivery but these are only tangentially related to *worship* as such. This little suite of materials has created to help monitoring and evaluation of worship in your school.

The SIAMS grade-descriptors provide a starting point but need to be used with care so that worship does not just become another box-ticking exercise.

There are two strands of monitoring that need to be taken account of:

Firstly, those intrinsic to worship itself, what SIAMS refers to as ‘attributes of worship and its theological basis’ and secondly the *impact* of worship in the community. This second aspect has two parts of its own; that which refers to the personal spiritual life of the individuals in a school and that which refers to the impact on the community.

Therefore, we can identify 3 aspects to our monitoring:

* Attributes and Theology (this includes planning);
* Personal impact;
* Community impact.

**Who monitors?**

Just as, in a church school, worship is to be experienced by the whole community, so worship should be monitored by a range of people from the community which will include governors, teachers, parents and children. This may well necessitate some level of training so that monitoring is consistent and to ensure that the evidence collected will be helpful in making evaluations.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation *follows* monitoring. Resist the temptation to use judgement terms (Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory…) in monitoring notes. These notes, from the various sources mentioned in this suite, form *evidence* for making judgements. These evaluative words need to be introduced when using Ofsted or SIAMS criteria and in conjunction with appropriate members of the school leadership team who have the experience and training to make judgements from evidence collected in school. The ODBE runs regular training on worship and SIAMS which will help in understanding the criteria for making accurate judgements.

**The Monitoring Suite**

The suite contains the following tools:

* Outline Criterion Grid
* Recording form 1: act of worship
* Recording Form 2: Pupil voice/questions/activities
* Questions and activities
* SMSCR Rose

**Monitoring Acts of Worship**

In order to evaluate worship meaningfully, whoever is doing the monitoring must first *participate* in the worship. So, if at all possible, sit amongst the pupils[[2]](#footnote-2), join in the songs and pray the prayers. When you are invited to reflect, do so. Resist the temptation to become an observer or some kind of meta-participant with a notebook and pen.

Make some notes on the worship *after* it is finished. It is best to have a clear focus for these, using the **Criterion Grid** and **Recording Form 1** may help with this. The criterion grid[[3]](#footnote-3) is laid out under the three aspects to monitoring noted above, it covers all of the current SIAMS expectations plus some other matters such as British Values. As is noted on the grid heading it is important to only use a limited number of statements as the focus area for any instance of monitoring. There are some notes with Recording Form 1 to aid its use. You may find that you wish to adapt the form for your specific circumstances.

Talk to some of the participants about their responses to the worship and their feelings about it. They may not correspond with yours! Noting the comments from children provides excellent evidence for effective monitoring. A number of the statements on the criterion grid can only really be commented on over time, some statements have been starred to indicate this, so you may need to consider these on several occasions. A complementary way to find evidence over time is to see how pupils speak of other acts of worship.

If you have any technical comments to make such as tone of voice, gesture etc. these should be mentioned to the Headteacher, *not* directly to the leader(s) of the act of worship. Unless they are the same person, in which case a degree of natural tact will be needed! Do not neglect to thank the leader(s) of the worship.

Planning needs to be systematic so that there is a clear focus on Christian beliefs and the dynamic of the Christian year. Schools should takes great care to ensure that faiths other than Christianity are recognised and that the worship is inclusive. Planning, monitoring and evaluation should involve the whole school community.

**Evidence from Pupils**

The activities section provides a range of things to do with pupils to help stimulate comments and conversation. The material is largely self-explanatory and the activities are easy to set up and work very well if used at the end of a theme or season. The activities can give a general picture of the impact of worship and the chance to capture specific and individual comments. **Recording Form 2** may be helpful in making a record of specific comments, as with form 1 you might wish to adapt the form for your own school.

**Journals**

Many schools have found that a form of journal is very helpful in appreciating the impact of worship and pupils’ reflections on worship. These can be individual journals or group journals. It is almost certainly not practical to do them daily but they are very effective if completed (as above) at the end of seasons or themes. There is no reason why adults or governors should not keep journals of their own. If pupils already keep a ‘spiritual journal’ some pages can be devoted to this reflection on worship.

**SMSCR Rose**

The SMSCR rose is a tool that gives an indication of the proportion of worship accorded to these dimensions of worship:

* Spiritual
* Moral
* Social
* Cultural, and
* Religious

The rose is to be used over a series of acts of worship, say a season or a theme. Whoever is using the rose fills in the squares to give an indication of the balance of each, use a separate rose for each act of worship. This is not exact but gives a rough guide. Each individual act of worship may have very great differences in proportion of each but over time they should show an appropriate level of consistency. Users should note that in multi-ethnic contexts the proportion of cultural content/reflection may well be very high.

At the end of the season you can gather all the roses together to see what picture emerges. If, for example, you find that the level of cultural experience is low[[4]](#footnote-4) you may need to consider why this might be. In reviewing the roses it would be appropriate to consider the contribution to British Values made by worship.

**Outside Collective Worship**

Many schools provide opportunities for prayer and other worship activities, such as Christian reflection, outside collective worship. This can be a circle time, Godly Play or simply a home-time prayer. These aspects of worship school not be neglected in monitoring, their overall impact can be very significant indeed.

1. It is, of course, the case that some worship resources such as ‘Roots and Fruits’ provide some material but this still needs to be adjusted to fit the ethos of your particular school. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. We use the term *pupils* throughout these notes to refer to children and students of all ages in schools. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This will be kept up to date with any changes to the SIAMS schedule. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It can be argued that culture is always high because worship is always imbued with British culture. This is not the intent here, worship needs to explore the *variety* of culture found in Britain and the rest of the world. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)