

RE Headlines

Change in daily Collective Worship for 16+ proposed

[20.07.06]



An amendment giving students aged 16+ the right to absent themselves from collective worship in school has been accepted by the government.

It was proposed during the Education and Inspections Bill's Lords committee stage by the Liberal Democrat Baroness Walmsley who argued that 16-year-olds could pay tax and get married, yet could not refuse to worship.

Canon John Hall, chief education officer for the Church of England, recognised that sixth form students may value greater freedom and flexibility in this area. His view was that collective worship also had value not only in providing an opportunity to encounter God but in equipping all pupils and students "with the tools of reflection and silence we all need to help cope with life-changing moments". He also saw collective worship as an opportunity to help promote tolerance and understanding and where strong links between school and community can be fostered.

Lord Adonis, on behalf of the government, accepted "most of the amendment" and said that an appropriate amendment would be moved at report stage.

A more detailed report of this change is on the BBC News site at:

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/5194456.stm