



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Date Renewed
24/10/2024

Review date
November 2026

Cherry Tree Primary School has a religiously diverse community. Many faiths are represented including those from non-religious families. The faith background of the child's family is respected at all times.

We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life, and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner. In assemblies we do not use prayer but regularly use moments of silence or reflection. This provides opportunities for reflection and for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Definitions

Collective worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring "collective" not "corporate" worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worth of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

Worship of a broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a "broadly Christian character", and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity

Aims

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for pupil's to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in everyday situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Engage in activities raising awareness of differing values, beliefs and traditions
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not
- Consider spiritual and moral issues
- Explore their own beliefs
- Encourage participation and response
- Develop a sense of community spirit
- Promote a common ethos with shared values and reinforce positive attitudes

Objectives

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community, the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....

Organisation

- Early Years Foundation Stage – have collective worship in their class almost every day. KS1 and KS2 have acts of collective worship within an assembly and sometimes in class. This is sometimes as a whole school or other times split in the key stages. One day a week worship is combined with celebrating achievement and sharing pupils work.
- The Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher will usually lead the whole school worship, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. Sometimes local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups are invited to contribute.
- We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell pupils that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect pupils to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and sometimes candles or other objects that act as a focal point for the attention of the pupils.

Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. All withdrawals are recorded in the child's personal file.