



## **Collective Worship**

## **Background**

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character' for the majority of the time. They must also be 'appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils'.

Families who send their children to our school are from a range of faith backgrounds, including Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Christian. In addition, there are children who are from non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider their background and it is therefore not the practice of our school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.

Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Co-Headteachers. Teachers may also withdraw from collective worship.

## **Values and Aims**

We believe 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.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children 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
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledging diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship develops the feeling of belonging to a community, which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

## **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 and 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
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

## **Planning**

At Oak Green School, we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. Key Stage 1 have their assembly from 9am to 9.15am daily and Key Stage 2 have theirs from 10.00am to 10.15am daily.

An assembly rota is provided by the RE lead and includes assemblies reflecting on our School Values (Monday), Our Right's Respecting School award/British Values/Cultural Capital (Tuesday), Singing assembly/Mental Health (Wednesday), themed assemblies (Thursday) and a celebration assembly (Friday). These are delivered by allocated staff within the school including our Co-headteachers, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Heads, Mental Health Lead and Class teachers.

Themed assemblies are carefully planned so that they encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading worship will then plan around these themes. We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

## **Song/music**

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music and songs to draw from, taken from a variety of cultures and types. We are careful with our song choice to recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We select songs/music carefully to match the theme and these are decided by our music subject lead using either our music scheme 'Charanga' or using YouTube to display lyrics.

## **Prayer**

We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to our prayers which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g. 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well-known Christian/Hindu/Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' In this way, we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish. We have added this into the end of Monday's and Friday's Assembly by asking the children to 'close their eyes' or use 'thinking minds' to think about what they would like to try achieve by the end of the week or have achieved this week.

## **Visitors**

We welcome visitors to our school from all faiths and backgrounds. Leaders of various faiths are invited into the school by the RE lead throughout the school year. If leading an assembly, we ask them to respect and follow our policy to ensure all children are able to access the collective worship.

## **Class-led assemblies**

Throughout the year, each class from year 1-6 will be given the opportunity to lead an assembly. The class teacher will be given the theme from the rota and then as a class they will present the topic. Parents and carers of children from this class will be invited in to watch.

### **EYFS Collective Worship**

Children in Reception will have a weekly assembly held in their provision led by the Assistant Headteacher. Pre-school and nursery have mini assemblies held by their key worker. During the Summer Term, Reception children will be invited to KS1's Monday and Friday assemblies as part of their transition into Year 1.