

Central Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

Our motto: Children are Central.

Introduction

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. While 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”.

The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times. Families who send their children to this Central Primary School are in the main ‘nominally’ Christian, and we do have some children from practising Christian families. There are a growing number of children who are from religions other than Christianity and non-religious backgrounds. We recognise that we have to consider the background that our children and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children.

The Head Teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents of children at Central Primary have a 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or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, we as a school will comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the head teacher and this will need to be confirmed in writing. Teachers may also withdraw from worship and should discuss this with the Head Teacher.

Some definitions

Collective worship

Worship from 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 worthy 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 Central Primary 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; just as it would be appropriate to tell stories of other religious figures from a range of religions but inappropriate to address them 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.

Values and Aims

We believe at Central Primary 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 the 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;
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school;
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus;
- Acknowledge 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 at Central Primary 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, 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 Central Primary collective worship generally takes place as part of our assembly time, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. The whole school meets every day for a morning assembly usually led by one of the leadership team. Occasionally we have separate key stage assemblies or class assemblies led by other members of staff where collective worship takes place.

The assembly timetable is divided into themes which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up.

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. 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. As a compromise we say a school creed together following a time of reflection which may have a multitude of starting points. Our school creed is based on a poem used in a lot of schools.

Central Primary School Creed

This is our school
Let peace dwell here
Let the room be filled with contentment
Let love abide here
Love of one another
Love of mankind
Love of life itself
Let us remember
As many hands build a house
So many hearts make a school

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. All visitors are issued with this policy and, unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the theme for the week.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a verity in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions;
- Sacred and secular stories/readings;
- Dance/drama;
- Prayer/meditation/songs/hymns/music;
- Artefacts/natural materials;
- Visual aids/focal points;
- Dialogue/creative silence;
- Visitors.

Success Criteria

At this school, we evaluate our acts of worship against the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils;
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community;

- Positive response to shared experience;
- An atmosphere which matches the theme;
- A contribution to individual and community sense of wellbeing;
- A sense of occasion;
- Good order;
- Staff affirmation;
- A sense of challenge;
- A place in the overall plan of the school;
- Enrichment of pupil's experience.

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 from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise, with the songs we sing. We are careful with our choice of songs recognising that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We have changed the words of some songs to make them more inclusive. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme of each assembly and this is detailed on the assembly timetable.

Every week we have a singing practice. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

Equality

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 we seek to;

- a) **eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the act
- b) **advance equality of opportunity** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) **foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

Our Collective Worship Policy promotes inclusion and seeks to allow all pupils to partake in collective worship while be sensitive to their beliefs and backgrounds.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of a named school governor, who is also responsible for religious education. The governor concerned liaises with the headteacher before reporting to the governors.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years