

# Itchen Abbas Primary School Collective Worship Policy



## 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 in the main ‘nominally’ Christian, but we do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition, there are an increasing number of children who are from non-religious backgrounds and some from religions other than Christianity. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of our school to promote a religion. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

## 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. Worship in school 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.

## Values and aims

We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our Learning values 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 supportive 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 in our school develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth. The more usual term 'assembly' indicates this sense of gathering together. For this reason, **no** child may be kept out of collective worship to be supported with other subjects.

## **Planning**

Our collective worship themes are planned on a yearly basis by our Humanities team leader. Planning considers important national and international days such as Remembrance Day or Diwali and special events and charity days relevant to the pupils such as World Book day and Children in Need day.

We include a focus on each learning value throughout the year, and we also include a focus on the themes of our PSHE lessons.

Once these elements of the planning are in place suggestions are made for relevant content for the worship which will include stories from the Christian tradition although staff leading Collective worship are able to introduce their own chosen relevant content.

Daily collective worship may be a whole school gathering but each week also includes Key stage and class assemblies which follow the same planning.

## **Visitors**

We welcome a range of visitors including parents to lead our worship as members of our community both locally and nationally, in order to enrich our pupils' experiences.

## **Songs and music**

Music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and can unify and uplift the school community. A planned bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and is planned by our music lead.

During our assemblies we take time to consider carefully the words of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

## **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 forms of introduction to our prayers which distance children, but give them the opportunity to participate if they wish.

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.

## **Monitoring**

All assemblies are recorded in a document called 'Assembly Themes' which is updated each year and reflects significant events.

## **Parents' right to withdraw**

We would ask any parent considering withdrawing their child from daily worship to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of collective worship. Staff may also withdraw from worship.

Date agreed by staff: May 2023

Date ratified by Governors: May 2023

To be reviewed every 3 years

Date for next review: May 2026