

Park Gate Primary School Policy for Collective Worship



Aims

Collective worship is a valued and valuable part of school life. At Park Gate Primary School collective worship aims to provide the opportunity for pupils and staff to:

- experience a variety of styles of worship;
- celebrate together e.g. festivals, our school values, individual achievements;
- build a sense of community;
- develop a reflective approach to living which sometimes encourages understanding of and invitation to prayer;
- look beyond the physical, material and measurable;
- worship God or reflect on human values;
- consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading, presentation and evaluation of worship
- feel safe and affirmed in doing any of the above.

Statutory requirements

By law, Collective Worship must

- take place for every child not withdrawn by their parents every day;
- be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character;
- take account of the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils;
- take place on the school premises, except on occasions, with agreement of governors.

Therefore, at Park Gate Primary School our collective worship reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. Not every act of collective worship must comply with this; just the majority so we can include material from other religions and non-religious world views.

Principles

The essential principles that apply to any act of worship are reflection, response and reverence.

Reflection

Time should be provided for children to reflect on the stimulus. To focus attention the presenter might light a candle, ask for stillness or read an evocative poem or piece of prose. The aim is to identify a time which is respected by all present and enables the pupils and staff to reflect upon a particular issue.

Response

Involvement in worship is primarily the decision of each individual. However, it is important that opportunities are provided which can be responded to in some way. Responses might be expressed in silent thoughts or more overtly by:

- singing together;
- repeating or reciting a response;

- listening to music;
- meditation or prayer.

Reverence

Creating a sense of reverence can be seen as a culmination of the other elements involved in worship. It can be directed towards the recognition of a supreme being or in terms of values and ideals. It is a celebration of the worthiness of those values held to be of central importance to our community.

At Park Gate collective worship will usually take place as follows;

Monday: Whole school – themed focus

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: online assembly, class assembly and singing

Friday: Whole school celebration

A termly programme of themes will lead the focus for collective worship. These will be reviewed and updated to ensure current needs, topical events and other changing circumstances are taken into account.

It is expected that staff will follow the suggested themes wherever possible but at the same time should be receptive to the needs of children and current events.

An annual theme will also be threaded through the year, for example, environmentalists and will be an opportunity for children to build their knowledge of significant people throughout history.

Prayer

At our school worship is mainly, broadly Christian. We introduce children to reflection and response through prayer. This does not imply that staff or children be put under pressure to conform to a prayer format or that thoughts and prayers from other faiths are excluded. However, staff and children are invited to join in with a prayer to make the words their own.

Withdrawal from Assembly

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from any acts of worship and staff are also free to withdraw from involvement in this aspect of school life. We request that those who wish to exercise their right inform the Headteacher in writing. We also appreciate opportunities to speak with parents and staff who have concerns about collective worship. We are always keen to develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible.

Worship

The British Council of Churches define worship as responses which “recognise, celebrate and affirm those issues, values and realities” which are central to the concerns of the school community and the community which it serves. This celebration of things which are of worth to the community may evoke feelings of awe and wonder, of sharing and belonging and should provoke a sense of search. Hopefully these

occasions will be enjoyable and thought provoking and may also include elements of both secular and religious worship.

Reviewed and approved by FGB: November 2023
Next Review: November 2025