



# Alfred Sutton Primary School

## Collective Worship Policy



### **BACKGROUND TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT OUR SCHOOL**

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 Alfred Sutton Primary School are from a range of religious backgrounds whilst some from non-religious backgrounds. 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 this 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.

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 any pupil have the right to withdraw their child 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wholly, or partly excused, from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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 headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from worship.

### **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.

### **VALUES AND AIMS**

We believe at Alfred Sutton Primary School that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our nurturing 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:

- Develop understand and empathy towards others, so we enable our pupils from many different backgrounds and cultures to work together to achieve their very best.
- Ensure everyone is kind and respectful towards themselves, others and their environment, developing good citizens for the future
- Ensure a nurturing ethos that instils a sense of personal responsibility.
- Value effort and working hard. Teach resilience and perseverance when faced with challenges and celebrate success when we work hard and give our best.
- Inspire a love of learning through a rich and purposeful curriculum. Provide opportunities to learn about issues that affect our lives and communities, to enable all to become independent thinkers

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 here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

**Values that are important to us (The Sutton Six):**

- Respect
- Resilience
- Responsibility
- Caring
- Compassion
- Aspiration

**OBJECTIVES**

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

- Show interest and concern for the daily happenings in our school community, the local community, the wider world
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes and standards that are manifested in religions, society and our school values
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- 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.
- Celebrate special occasions together.

**PLANNING**

In this school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. Due to the size of Alfred Sutton Primary School, assemblies are generally



held in phases or class groups. The headteacher usually leads school worship once a week, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days.

We choose from a range of methods allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings/Dance/drama
- Prayer/meditation:

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence for reflection time provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

- Songs/hymns/music: We select our songs/music carefully to match moral themes. We recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing.
- Artefacts/natural materials/Visual aids/focal points/Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors: We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values.

### **IMPACT**

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

- Collective Worship that supports our school vision: Happy together. Achieving together.
- Embedding our nurturing ethos, respect and tolerance within the school community
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- Positive response to shared experience. Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- Enrichment of pupil's experience.