

# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP



**The Brook Special Primary School**

**Revised: February 2021**

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## **RATIONALE**

Worship, in the strictest sense, involves those of the same faith sharing, praising and affirming belief in a divine being. The Brook Special School is a school community, not a single-faith community. At present we have members of the following religious traditions –Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Rastafarian, and people from no faith community at all. Learning takes place in an educational context and not in the context of a community with shared religious beliefs. The Brook Special School is a school in which acts of worship takes place in an educational setting.

Our acts of worship create experiences from which children and young people can reflect on the world to which they contribute. This could include thinking about the presence of a deity but it will also include dealing with experiences and issues central to the spiritual dimension – awe, mystery , life , death, relationships , achievement, loss, celebration, awareness of self and others, and wonder.

What we hope to achieve is to develop among our pupils some understanding and experience of universal moral behaviour and respect for humanity.

Collective Worship is a crucial focus within the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils as individuals and is part of the means of fostering a collective identity with common values, which offers support, care and respect within the school community.

## **Aims and Objectives for Collective Worship**

- To enable pupils to experience/use silence , reflection and contemplation
- To celebrate what has meaning , purpose and value to them and the school
- To celebrate achievement, religious festivals and special occasions
- To experience , recognise and demonstrate respect for cultural difference and religious diversity within the school community
- To enable pupils to experience/appreciate the concept of worship and to focus on spiritual development
- To explore and understand shared human values and experiences through life

## **Approaches to Collective Worship**

- Assemblies are a time when the whole school can meet together to experience a sense of community, caring, thanks giving, sharing and a sense of wonder at our universe, plus an awareness of religious feeling. We celebrate key personal, cultural and religious occasions.
- Each Class meets every morning in circle time to greet, share experiences and a sense of belonging. There is a greeting song, adapted for every class.
- Each class leaves every day with a goodbye circle, sometimes with candles, contemplating the day and remembering things which have happened during the day which may be of particular significance. The class finish with a goodbye song at the end of every day.
- On Friday afternoon of each week there are assembly times. These take the form of the whole school assemblies to celebrate religious festivals or themes such as Black History Month; Refugee week or Global Curriculum Work. Each class takes responsibility for preparing and leading a different assembly and performs their interpretation for the rest of the school.
- In between the whole school assemblies come key stage assemblies where we celebrate more individually the achievements of particular children. All children will take their place at these assemblies when they are the focussed child of the week.
- For assemblies, pupils sit in class groups with staff in the form of a horseshoe so that everyone can be given access to the particular theme of the assembly
- All assemblies end with a special 'going home song' which is signed
- There are also inclusive events for the whole school community, including the Willow Primary School – these include particular celebrations from our two major faiths, such as the Christian Festival of Christ's Birth and Eid where the two school communities such as the Christian Festival of the Candlemas or to celebrate Eid. 600 children plus staff can come together at one time for these amazing celebrations, which are very moving and bring together the whole school in a communal celebration and allow children and young people to learn more about traditions and customs and beliefs associated with world faiths.

## **Celebrations of achievement**

- Each assembly may be accompanied by a range of sensory activities and resources- smells, lights e.g. candles, incense, particular pieces of music for each day and accepted behaviours e.g. quietly reflective and still/lively with dancing or singing. Whole school assemblies symbolise togetherness of the whole school community.
- Community languages and singing are used during assemblies if possible
- Pupils' birthdays are celebrated on the nearest possible day
- A special birthday table and cake is provided
- Class present stickers and/or certificates for achievements at final circles in the classroom during the week. Duplicates are put in the home/school book to show parents/carers.
- A record is kept of those pupils' achievements or celebration assemblies and each Key Stage has a corridor display board in which these successes are highlighted

- The main religious and cultural festivals observed by the school community are celebrated throughout the year. Parents /carers and staff from particular faiths are asked what festivals they feel we should celebrate, what the main teaching of that festival is and how we should celebrate it. Wherever possible parents/carers and Governors are involved in the celebration of the festival, and if appropriate, religious leaders are invited to lead the proceedings.
- Currently, the festivals celebrated are:
  - Christmas and Easter (Christianity)
  - Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Addha (Muslim)
  - Diwali and Holi (Hindu)
  - Baisakhi and Guru Nanak’s Birthday (Sikh)
  - Hanukkah (Jewish)
  - Emperor Haile Selassie’s Birthday (Rastafarian)
  - Chinese New Year
  - Saint Patrick’s Day
  - St George’s Day

## **ACTS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **Legal Requirements**

The Education Reform Act (1988) requires schools to provide a daily act of collective worship for all registered pupils.

Nursery schools and classes are exempt from the requirements.

- Pupils in special schools should attend acts of “collective worship” as far as is practicable.
- Headteachers in county schools must consult the governors, but are themselves responsible for arranging acts of worship and ensuring that they take place, even if on grounds of conscience, they absent themselves.
- Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship and this needs to be made clear in the school prospectus.
- Teachers, including headteachers, have the same rights of withdrawal.
- A whole school or part of a school can be excused from acts of collective worship which are “wholly or mainly Christian” but not from daily worship. This “determination” can only be granted by Haringey Standing Advisory Council for R.E. (SCARE)
- The Headteacher is legally responsible for collective worship.

## Making Assemblies accessible for all pupils

'Religious education for very special Children' Flo Longhorn, 1993

### Backgrounds to Assembly

- Visual space free of junk or disorder
- Focus point central focus point, e.g. bright table/flowers/sculptures
- Lighting well lit, use of a spotlight to draw attention
- Temperature not too hot, cold or draughty
- Sound audible, microphone, no background noise such as blow heaters
- Smell a special for assembly e.g. incense or floral spray comfortable, able to see
- Seating room set in a circle, semi-circle or a square so all can participate
- Helping hands co-active participation. A helper to move body parts and encourage and reassure pupils
- Belonging all pupils absorbed into the main body/class groups
- Anticipation talk about assembly beforehand, increase excitement and anticipation

### During Assembly

- The unexpected be prepared for noises of children, unexpected dashes for freedom or epileptic fits for freedom or epileptic fits.
- Structure a beginning, middle and end – set format
- Participation opportunity to join in
- Reflection a time to think, reflect and be still
- Sound a range of music, modern and old to reflect theme
- Verbal Sound (augmented by signing) short, varied in tone , in the language of the child, variety of Voices
- Movement not static, drama, mime, instruments
- Artefacts to show ,pass round, eat , smell, examine
- Speakers well primed , reassured if they feel overwhelmed
- The senses awareness of their importance for everyone to enjoy aspects of assembly
- The end a definite rhythm to everyone leaving in an orderly in an orderly fashion- music Helps

## **Collective worship and its relationships to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Collective Worship is a focal point for demonstrating and emphasising, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, SMSC is also promoted and demonstrated within the ethos of the school, Religious Education and throughout the curriculum and especially in educational visits and school journeys

### **As they move through the school –**

Pupils are able to:

- Experience a range of feelings including joy, sorrow, wonder and curiosity, inspired by places and environments as well as people
- Express their feelings and emotions
- Make choices
- Make friends and become part of a group/class
- Listen and respond
- Look and ask for help
- Work by themselves

### **Pupils should come to know and understand that:**

- They matter to other people and that they are different from everyone else – a unique and valuable individual
- What they do and say affects others
- They and others have feelings and experiences which are sometimes good and sometimes not good
- They have bodies which can be healthy or sick
- There are rules they should follow
- There are behaviours which are right and wrong
- Their environment can be pleasant and enjoyable/unpleasant and unattractive

### **Pupils become increasingly:**

- Aware/secure/attentive and curious /confident/eager/independent/sensitive/willing/fair/able to take responsibility

### **Pupils become increasingly able to show an:**

- Awareness of, and interest in, their surroundings
- Awareness of themselves and others
- Self-esteem/self-respect
- Concern for others' feelings
- Experience and enjoyment of music, art, drama, the natural world

## **Examples of Experiences/ Learning Opportunities within the Curriculum**

- English: development of communication/story-telling/poetry/drama
- Maths: patterns and symmetry – what comes next/certainty
- Science: experience /curiosity/ wonder about the human body/plants and animals, the natural world
- History: experiencing everyday life of past times/costume/music etc.
- Geography: experiencing their own and other environments /sense of identity and community
- Art: exploring/experiencing different media/art works/ celebrating their own and others' Work
- Music: experience/enjoy the effect of music, rhythm, sounds and silence. In performing Recognising own contribution and self- worth.
- PE: experience exhilaration/movement/reflecting on the necessity for rules/sharing Games with others
- RE experiencing different faiths/religion/visiting places of worship which inspire an atmosphere of awe and wonder
- PSHCE promotion of identity /self-esteem/independence/learning about people

## **Examples of Experiences/ Learning Opportunities within the broader Curriculum:**

- Circle Time
- Visits to fire or police stations/places of worship/local nature reserves
- Speakers from the religious community in full regalia/local community e.g. fire fighters /police
- Visits to museums , galleries, plays and concerts
- Play/Leisure /Games –sharing/listening /joining in
- Class organised assemblies – working together/celebrating experiences/achievements
- Collective Worship –fostering reflection and spirituality
- Animals in school e.g. chicks in science
- Nature tables and walks
- Imaginative play e.g. home corner/drama/artsreach
- Integrated opportunities with mainstream peers
- School/class systems – taking responsibility for register /sharing/cooperating/ respecting ownership of pegs/bags/helping classmates
- Display/celebrations of pupils' experiences/achievements

## **All the above are reflected in the following school policies and guidelines:**

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Pupils' Charter
- Guidelines for intimate Care
- Behaviour Policy
- Parent Partnership
- RE Policy and Documentation
- Global Curriculum Work and Documentation
- Fundamental British Values