Springfield Primary School

School Policy

Collective Worship

Adopted: November 2026

Date for review: November 2029

Collective Worship Policy

Collective worship at Springfield Primary School

1. 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".

2. Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian, but we do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and 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 practise of this school to preach to or engage in practice that could be considered in design to convert the children. The faith background of the staff and the child's family is respected at all times.

3. The Headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the Governing Body. Parents of a pupil at a local authority maintained school 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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.

Definitions

Collective worship

4. 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 worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

5. 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 background are of any faith or none. In this way, collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

Worship of a 'broadly Christian' character

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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

9. At Springfield Primary School, we adhere to the six principles identified by the Essex Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) in order to ensure that acts of collective worship or spiritual reflection are meaningful and relevant to all those present.

10. The principles state that collective worship should:
    - Promote a sense of community;
    - Be educational;
    - Promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development;
    - Be a special time;
    - Enable participants to be actively involved;
    - Be of high quality.

11. We believe 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.

12. Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for our children to:
    - Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community;
    - Grow in understanding of the feelings of 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.

13. 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.

Objectives

14. 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 and the wider world;
    - Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school;
    - Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes and 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.

Organisation of collective worship

15. We hold a daily act of collective worship. This forms part of each morning assembly, which can be either a whole-school assembly, key stage specific assembly or an in-class assembly.

16. We conduct assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that assembly time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and to participate in reflective thought. Children are encouraged to celebrate the achievements of their peers and contribute to the content of assemblies.

17. The assemblies are normally conducted by the Headteacher or other members of staff, but are sometimes led by local clergy or other representatives of local religious groups. We welcome Governor attendance at our assemblies. We seek to invite a range of visitors to our school to support our collective worship including those from different religious and cultural backgrounds, SMSC based workshops and speakers, representatives from the emergency services, charities and community groups. Please refer to our visiting speakers policy.

18. Every week there is an achievement assembly at which success is celebrated. Awards and recognition are given to achievements both and out of school. We celebrate achievements both in and out of school.

19. British Values and school values are explored regularly during throughout the year through a detailed schedule of assembly themes.

20. We choose the content of our assemblies from a range of sources including:
    - Pupil contributions;
    - Sacred and secular stories and readings;
    - Dance and drama;
    - Prayer, meditation, songs, hymns and music;
    - Artefacts and natural materials;
    - Visual aids / focal points;
    - Dialogue / creative silence;
    - Visitors;
    - Key events in the national and international calendars.

Songs, music and prayer

21. Song and 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.

22. While prayer can be an effective way of enabling children to focus their thoughts, pupils are not required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. It is not always necessary to have a prayer, and the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Visitors

23. We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we ask them to reflect and adhere to our values. We have made links with some people who visit us regularly to lead worship.

Right of withdrawal

24. We expect all children to attend assembly. However any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the assembly. Parents and carers do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.