



Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School  
Collective Worship Policy  
June 2017

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN COMMUNITY and FOUNDATION SCHOOLS (without a religious character)

### 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 are usually “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”.

Assemblies must be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”. We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the backgrounds that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith backgrounds of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times. There are many families from Muslim and Christian backgrounds in school. In addition, there are children who are from non-religious backgrounds.

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 a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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 collective worship.

### SOME DEFINITIONS

#### **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 who are worthy of honour, and by extension to 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.

#### **Worship of a broadly Christian character**

We value the contributions of all religions and cultures in order to provide truly inclusive school assemblies.

### 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 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. Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting 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 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 here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

## BRITISH VALUES

At Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School the curriculum actively promotes the fundamental British values as outlined by both Ofsted and the Department for Education.

Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School is working effectively in reinforcing and securing these shared values in the following ways:

### **Democracy:**

Democracy is considered to be very important within the school and the children have an understanding and respect for the democratic process at a simple level. They are actively encouraged to decision making and know that their viewpoints are important.

All children are consulted at the beginning of each year when the Class Agreements are drawn up to reinforce expectations about behaviour in the classroom, around the school and also learning behaviour. All children were invited to name the school guinea pigs and class names. Children vote for School Council members. They are reminded about the importance of one vote and how this needs to be adhered to in order to maintain fairness. At Holtsmere any perceived injustices that the children may have are dealt with promptly and fairly.

### **The Rule of Law:**

The importance of laws, whether they be those that govern the class, the school, or the country, are consistently reinforced on a regular basis, as well as when dealing with behaviour and also through school assemblies. School rules and expectations are clear and fair. The children are taught about the reasons why we have laws and how these keep us safe and also the consequences when Class Agreements are not followed.

At Holtsmere the children are aware that the school rules are there for all children and that everyone is expected to adhere to these. They are aware that these rules relate to their rights and responsibilities.

### **Individual Liberty:**

Children are actively encouraged to make choices at school, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. At Holtsmere we are committed to ensure that our children develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

As a school we educate and provide boundaries for the children to make choices safely. Children are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and advised how to exercise these safely, for example through our E-Safety and PSHCE lessons. There is also a significant focus on their responsibilities to ensure that they are also respectful about the rights of others. They understand the importance of listening to each other and the right to be able to disagree when discussing their viewpoints.

### **Mutual Respect:**

At Holtsmere a huge emphasis is placed on respecting each other while children are learning and also at play. This is a core value that is promoted through our behaviour management and fundamental in everything we do at Holtsmere. Values such as being respectful and also taking personal responsibility for actions are promoted in classes and also in school assemblies. Class Agreements promote respect for others and this is reiterated through our classroom and learning rules, as well as our policies and home school agreement.

### **Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs:**

Holtsmere serves a very culturally rich community and this is celebrated in our curriculum, activities and commitment to ensure that all experiences are valued.

Differences and similarities between cultures and ethnic groups, disability and gender and family situations are discussed during class and whole school activities. Assemblies and discussions involving prejudices and prejudice-based bullying have been followed and supported by learning in RE and PSHCE.

Children are actively encouraged to share their knowledge to enhance learning within classes and the school. Visitors from and visits to different religious places of worship are actively encouraged. A majority of significant festivals and religious days are respected and there is a programme of visits to different places of worship. Any comments deemed as intolerant are treated highly sensitively.

### **OBJECTIVES**

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, 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

## **PLANNING**

In this school we combine our acts of worship with daily assemblies, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. The head teacher leads assemblies twice a week, with a rota of other staff leading on other days. Assemblies are held from 10.30 – 10.40 every morning. They are attended by pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. Reception children attend some assemblies from the Autumn Term. The assembly content is outlined below.

During the week there are five assemblies which cover:

PSHE/R.E focus twice a week; a singing assembly, a birthday and good work celebration and an awards assembly.

PHSE assemblies are planned in half termly topics linking in with the Go Givers programme.

RE assemblies are linked with the celebration of religious festivals as they occur through the year.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Quiet reflection/songs/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Visitors
- Stories which are relevant to Infant School children with a relevant message

## **SUCCESS CRITERIA**

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

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
- A sense of occasion
- Good order

- Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

## **SOME CHALLENGES**

### **Staff non-contact time**

We recognise the value of the whole school, including staff being involved in our school worship. We also appreciate the need for staff to have some time during the school day set aside for planning and preparation within their teams. Therefore, staff have a rota of non-contact time when they can hold short team meetings.

### **Song/music**

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music and songs from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme.

### **Prayer**

It is not 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 if they so wish.

### **Visitors**

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. All visitors are issued with this policy and, unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the theme and structure for the week.

**June 2017**