



## Weetwood Primary School

### Assembly & Collective Worship/Reflection Policy

Last Reviewed: January 2015  
Next Review: January 2018

*Respecting each other,  
Expecting our best,  
Learning in a happy school.*

#### **Introduction and Background**

At Weetwood we aim for assemblies to reflect and strengthen the caring ethos of the school and the value that is placed on the development of the whole child - intellectually, emotionally, morally, socially, culturally and spiritually. We hope that they provide a special time in the school day for children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner. Assemblies encompass all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every pupil and every member of staff may feel involved. To develop their respect for others the children are encouraged to be quiet, calm and thoughtful during assemblies and to listen carefully. Overall, we hope that assemblies are positive, encouraging and inspiring, and develop the feeling of belonging to a community, which is essential for personal development and moral and spiritual growth.

#### **Legal Requirement**

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" (1988 Education Reform Act and the Education Act 1993). Under this act, parents also have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship if they so wish.

Children and staff at Weetwood come from a wide range of religious as well as non-religious backgrounds. Our collective worship, therefore, whilst in line with this requirement, draws on a variety of religious and secular/ethical traditions, many characteristics of which are shared with Christianity. Assemblies are also conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school. For example, the Department for Education (paragraphs 60-63 of the Circular 1/94) asks schools to define the broadly Christian character of their worship as according a special status to Jesus Christ. As Weetwood aims to be an inclusive school in which all pupils are respected, stories of the life of Jesus may be told, for example, but it is inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer. Similarly, pupils are not required to say, sing or affirm prayers or words in which they do not believe. Prayer is one way of enabling children to focus their thoughts but regular moments of silence or collective reflection provide opportunities for pupils to respond in a personal way according to their beliefs. Ideas from different traditions are used as a stimulus for thought by children of all backgrounds. We are also careful not to label children, or to expect them to label themselves, according to the beliefs of their family, anymore than it would be appropriate to do so according to their family's political affiliation. Children are thereby given the freedom to gradually develop their own opinions and beliefs and to choose their own life stance, through experience of as diverse a range of life perspectives as possible.

## **Our Aims**

Through our assemblies we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment in which children may:

- develop at their own pace individual beliefs and values, including spiritual/religious beliefs.
- think deeply about moral issues and questions regarding equality, social justice, human rights, conflict and ethical and sustainable living.
- develop their ability to examine and make judgements about behaviour, personal integrity and active citizenship.
- enhance their awareness of concepts that may lie outside their immediate experience.
- deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them and reflect upon the many different dimensions of human life - courage, achievement, love, compassion, altruism, imagination, heroism, tragedy, sorrow, joy, hope, responsibility, humanitarian endeavour and the mystery of existence.
- develop a sense of belonging to a school family and community and experience a shared understanding and an individual and community sense of self esteem and well being.
- develop a sense of personal identity and become increasingly aware of themselves as important and unique, but also aware of the opportunities and responsibilities associated with local, national and global citizenship.
- show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school and wider community.
- grow in knowledge and understanding of multi-cultural societies, their structures and characteristics.
- acknowledge diversity and respect and affirm different ethical and religious beliefs, values and traditions.
- grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in every day situations and explore the language which people use to express their feelings.
- grow in confidence when performing or making a presentation to the whole school.

## **Assemblies are an opportunity to**

- explore the variety of values, attitudes and standards manifested in religions and society.
- celebrate special occasions together, including multi-faith religious festivals, and welcome parents and other members of the community to share in our festival performances.
- share concern for and interest in the daily happenings of school life, the local community, and the wider world, for example through focusing on national or international events and global issues.
- share and show appreciation for projects undertaken by groups within the school and the achievements and talents of individuals.
- share ideas and decisions made by The School Council, so that all children feel actively involved and their views valued.
- reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed higher feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice and service to other people and to God.
- celebrate and admire people of excellence, and concepts, principles and conduct which serve as examples of the highest achievements of humanity.
- enrich and challenge the children's experience and promote insight into other peoples lives and experiences through visitors from the local and wider communities.

## Organisation

Assemblies are led by the Head Teacher, Deputy Head and Assistant Head, and on occasion by other members of staff. Pupils also take assemblies and are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership. Visitors are welcomed from time to time.

Assemblies often include a hymn or song, prayer/time for quiet reflection, a secular or religious story, a short drama or dance performed by the children and music to lead into or out of assembly.

Song and music are powerful means of unifying and inspiring the school community and of creating an atmosphere or sense of occasion. We use a variety of music and songs from many different traditions and cultures. The children help to select music and songs and we try to use ones that do not include words that any members of the school community might find offensive.

Assemblies may draw on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration, and include themes from religious and philosophical teachings. Artefacts, natural materials and other visual aids may be used.

- Monday: Assembly reflecting issues in school. This aims to unite the whole school and develop a sense of community. (9.05am)
- Tuesday: Assembly with song and prayer/opportunity for inward reflection. (9.05am)
- Wednesday: Singing assembly at 9.05am (also Birthday assembly)
- Thursday: Class Council with quiet reflection.
- Friday: 'Superstars and Wizards' achievements assembly. This is the time when we celebrate the achievements of children at Weetwood. Superstar awards are given to children for commendable behaviour; Wizard certificates are given for good work. Children who have been noted by a member of staff for a particularly commendable action during the week receive 'You've been noticed' awards. We also celebrate the completion of individual sticker charts and out of school achievements. (2.40pm)

## Equal opportunities

The culture and ethos of the school are such that everyone in the school community, whatever their ability/disability, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, age, sexuality or gender, is equally valued and treated with respect. All children will be provided with opportunities to experience, understand and celebrate diversity through Assemblies and Collective Worship.