



## Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

<b>Policy Creation and Review</b>	
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# Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

## The legal position

Religious education is statutory, but not part of the National Curriculum because it is taught in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus (in our case the Newham Agreed syllabus). We must stress that Religious Education has the same status and importance as any other foundation subject and the same high standards are applied to Religious Education as to all other foundation subjects.

We teach Religious Education according to the aims of the Newham Agreed Syllabus which is written by SACRE to suit the demography and diversity of the area. The local SACRE review and agree the syllabus every 5 years alongside all faith leaders and this also refers to visiting places of worship. All faith leaders agreed that children should participate in RE in order to have an understanding of the people they meet and of the wider world.

This policy sets out the aims and implementation of the Religious Education and Collective Worship at Odessa Infant School.

1. Aims
2. Implementation
3. Parents/carers
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### 1. School Aims and Implementation

Odessa Infant School aims to provide children the opportunity to achieve their best academically, emotionally and socially:

- To foster the development of positive attitudes in order to encourage pupils to see themselves as an equal, valued and valid part of the school and community.
- To support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enriching and broadening their experiences values and beliefs.
- To support children in understanding and engaging with fundamental 'British' values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance with those with different faiths and beliefs.
- To provide opportunities for children to ask, explore and reflect on questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- Enhancing children's awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.
- Developing children's sense of identity and belonging, within the local, national and global community.
- To enable children to develop understanding of, respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.

- Providing the highest standard of education to enable children to acquire the skills, knowledge and concepts relevant to their future.
- Promoting an ethos of care, mutual respect and support, where effort is valued and success celebrated.

## **RE Policy Introduction**

- Odessa Infant School is made up of children who originate from many nationalities, cultures and faith groups. As a school we aim to celebrate this diversity and offer a welcoming and inclusive environment for all our pupils, including new arrivals and non-native English speakers.
- We believe that Religious Education (RE) provides an opportunity to celebrate and foster awareness of these differences within our school and the wider world. It is a subject that celebrates diversity.

## **Aims**

### **General**

The broad aim of religious education at Odessa Infant School is to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural and intellectual development of children. We enable children to develop knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. This is achieved by encouraging children to explore and respond to these aspects of religion and draw upon their own experiences. We help the children learn **about** religions as well as **from** religions.

### **Children**

At Odessa Infant School, we aim to:

- Encourage children to reflect on their own experiences and to formulate their own ideas, beliefs and values.
- Help children to develop moral and spiritual values, respect and tolerance, which enables them to appreciate and understand religions, cultures and ways of life different from their own.
- Have respect for other people's views and celebrate the diversity in society.
- Appreciate that symbols and artefacts from different religions can express human feeling and ideas.
- Foster understanding about the importance of tolerance in everyday life.
- Foster positive attitudes towards celebration of differences.
- Develop an enjoyment of learning through practical activities, discussion exploration and discovery.
- Communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary.
- Use children's experiences of religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Guru Nanak, Eid to develop their religious thinking.

### **School Staff**

At Odessa Infant School, we aim to:

- Promote a confident, positive attitude towards the learning of RE by making it an enjoyable experience.
- Promote RE as an active subject; this would be modelled by the teacher in the teaching activities provided.
- Promote a desire to understand the 'world' of other people and an active interest in how they express this 'world'.

- Be perceptive, and recognise this in pupils.
- Extend children's sense of values and promote their spiritual growth and development.
- Acknowledge that beliefs and ideas are constantly changing.
- Promote interaction, allowing pupils to relate themselves to others, reflect and respond.
- Ensure that RE teaching throughout the school shows progression and is based on the Newham Agreed Syllabus.
- Develop links with the wider community through visits to places of worship.
- Assess children's attainment and progress in RE on a termly basis.

### **Parents and Carers**

At Odessa Infant School, we aim to:

- Be understanding and supportive of our aims in learning and teaching of RE.
- Support and encourage their children during Place of Worship trips.
- Praise their children for their understanding of other beliefs and cultures.
- Communicate and work with the school whenever further support is needed to develop their children's RE skills and understanding.

### **Governors**

At Odessa Infant School, we aim to:

- Appoint a designated link governor who will:
  - a) Meet with the curriculum Subject Leader at least once a year to find out about:
    - The school's systems for planning work, supporting staff and monitoring progress.
    - Place of Worship visits.
    - The allocation, use and adequacy of resources.
  - b) Visit the school and talk to pupils about their experiences of the curriculum area.
  - c) Promote and support the positive involvement of parents in the curriculum area.
  - d) Report to the governing body with recommendations, if appropriate, once a year.
- Be understanding and supportive of our aims in learning and teaching RE and review the RE Policy annually.

## **2. Implementation of the RE Policy**

### **The LA Newham Agreed Syllabus**

- Our RE curriculum is in accordance with the Newham LA Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that topics build on prior learning. There is a planned progression built into the scheme of work. An RE topic is taught every half term, as a blocked area of study or as a set of individual weekly lessons.
- Planning for Religious Education is based on the two Attainment Targets in the Agreed Syllabus:
  - a) Learning about Religions - Attainment Target 1 (AT1)
 

Learning about Religion includes enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religion, its key beliefs and teachings, practices, their impacts on the lives of believers and communities, and the varying ways in which these are expressed.
  - b) Learning from Religions - Attainment Target 2 (AT2)
 

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' ability to reflect on and make responses about a religion being taught from their own experiences. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and values, and communicating their responses.

- **Teaching and learning style**
- We recognise that our children have differing abilities, so we provide suitable learning and opportunities for all children by matching the task to the ability of the child, for example by:
  - a) Setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
  - b) Grouping children by ability and setting different tasks for each ability group.
  - c) Providing resources of different complexity, adapted to suit children.
  - d) Using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or group of children.
  - e) Differentiating by outcome.

### Teaching organisation

- Religious Education in the Foundation stage is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. Planning at Reception is based on the 'Development Matters' and 'Early Years Foundation Stage' documents. We relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the Curriculum.
- RE is taught both as a discrete subject and through 'Spiritual Play' stories/discussions (As outlined within the Newham LA Agreed Syllabus).
- In KS1, aspects of RE are taught through English, Collective Worship, assemblies and festival celebrations e.g. Eid, Guru Nanak and Diwali, circle time activities and birthdays. There are also RE lessons structured within each individual class's timetable.

### Place of Worship Visits/Visitors

- Place of Worship Trips are organised during the year to support and complement the work in school and to promote links with the local community. We aim to invite more representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children in a sensitive manner.

### Cross Curricular

- Opportunities are used to draw RE experiences out of a range of activities in other subjects to enable children to apply and use RE in real life and academic contexts.
  - a) **Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship (PSCHE):** Through RE we teach children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. RE promotes the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility.
  - b) **Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL):** Through RE education we encourage children to value their own beliefs and feelings while developing an understanding and respect for people who present different viewpoints.
  - c) **British Values:** Through RE education we encourage tolerance as part of our British Values to ensure children understand the beliefs of others.

### 3. Parents/Carers

- The School aims to involve parents/carers in their children's learning as much as possible.
- Parents/carers have the opportunity to meet with the child's class/set teachers at parent evenings and receive a summative report during these sessions.
- Parents are invited to take part in celebrations where they may contribute to activities and join in to celebrate or are invited to watch a show.

#### 4. The RE Lesson: Good Practice

- An excellent RE lesson also links to the use of starters/introduction a main teaching activity and a plenary or series of mini plenaries throughout the lesson if appropriate.
- Children should be given the opportunity to **Reflect** on an aspect of human experience in order to understand the relevance of the content being taught (AT2) i.e. use of picture, music, story, artefact, visualisation, article.
- Children should be given the opportunity to **Relate** their own experiences to the content being studied (AT1) i.e. sequencing, re-telling, role play, discussion.
- Children should be given the opportunity to **Respond** to the content through their own personal experience in a thoughtful and constructive way (AT1/2) i.e. creative writing, making something, display work, hot seating.

To ensure targets are met and that all units of work are covered thoroughly, children at Odessa Infant School will:

- Visit a different place of worship every year to learn about religions locally as well as worldwide.
- have a local charity called Faith in Schools in Schools come in to our school 3 times a years and cover some of our Christian Units.
- Also embed their learning of all faiths through assemblies.

#### 5. Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting

- We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and through marking diagnostically. Assessment is based upon the child's ability in understanding various ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour. As well as the ability of a child to reflect on their own experiences and the experiences of others and respond to them in a thoughtful and constructive way.
- Assessments are used diagnostically by teachers to evaluate learning and inform teaching and by teachers and senior leaders within the Accountability Process to evaluate individual and groups of children's standards and achievements and provision and to inform future provision and school development.
- Use evidence of what individual children know, understand and can do in RE gained by observations, listening to and discussing with them, marking and evaluating any written responses they produce.

#### 6. Inclusion

- Inclusion is about every child having educational needs that are special and the school meeting these diverse needs in order to ensure the active participation and progress of all children in their learning.
- Successful inclusive provision at Odessa Infant School is seen as the responsibility of the whole school community, permeating all aspects of the school life and applicable to all our pupils. It is in this way that we will turn the rhetoric into reality.

- Inclusive practice in RE should enable all children to achieve their best possible standard whatever their ability, and irrespective of generic, ethnic, social or cultural background, home language or any other aspect that could affect their participation in, or progress in their learning.

## **7. Collective Worship**

Odessa Infant School aims to provide children the opportunity to develop towards their full potential; academically, emotionally and socially:

- Providing the highest standard of education to enable children to acquire the skills, knowledge and concepts relevant to their future.
- Promoting an ethos of care, mutual respect and support, where effort is valued and success celebrated.
- Enabling children to become active, responsible and caring members of the school and wider community.

The school works towards these aims by:

- Promoting high quality learning and attainment.
- Providing a high quality learning entitlement and environment.
- Valuing each other and ourselves.
- Working in partnership with parents and the community.

### **Collective Worship - Legal requirements (Local Authority Guidance)**

1. The Law (Education Reform Act 1988, 1993, 1996) states that all pupils at a maintained school take part in an act of collective worship every day, and that this shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. It also states that parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or part of collective worship.
2. The definition for "Worship" is drawn from the DFE circular 1/94; "Worship must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power...worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common."
3. Schools should provide opportunities for worship to happen and enable pupils to respond reflectively. The primary function of the daily act of collective worship is an educational one; that is to promote spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development.
4. Therefore, collective worship should be active rather than passive and directed towards something personal (e.g. thinking about someone, or a value, or a time for reflection and response to God).

### **Collective Worship at Odessa Infant School**

At Odessa Infant School, Collective Worship is often set within the context of 'Assemblies' - which may include other features besides those required of collective worship. Assemblies and Collective Worship at Odessa Infant School are to be both spiritual and educational and are recognised as having a major contribution to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils.

- The act of Collective Worship must be seen as a distinct aspect of an assembly;
  - Collective Worship is a special time for pupils to reflect upon life experiences and ultimate questions and if appropriate focus on God. It should allow the pupils to be able to make a spiritual response.
  - An assembly is a gathering of part or all of the children and staff at the school. It is concerned with administrative matters and other announcements about school life.
- Worship has a wide range of meanings and forms of expression. For some people this might be devotion to a divine being, power or personal God; for others it might mean reflection on and understanding of those elements of life which are of value and worth.
- Collective Worship involves members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly three times a week. These assemblies may involve all of the pupils in the school in whole school assemblies, separate phase group assemblies or class based acts of collective worship; with their times varying accordingly.

### **School Staff**

Through Collective Worship we aim to:

- Provide an all-inclusive opportunity to build and reinforce community values;
- Reflect on and understand elements of life which are of value and worth;
- Provide a variety of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development;
- Provide opportunities for expressing shared experiences and interests and for celebrating special occasions together;
- Provide opportunities in which pupils interact with other year groups, staff and on occasions the wider community;
- Fulfil statutory requirements of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

### **Pupils**

Through collective worship we aim to encourage and promote the opportunity for children to:

- Learn about life, each other, the community and the world they live in;
- Learn about and promote greater understanding, tolerance and respect for each other's cultures and beliefs;
- Help develop empathy, caring and sensitivity and a positive self-image;
- Celebrate in each other's successes and achievements through sharing work and ideas, thereby developing a sense of belonging to the school community;
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of the importance of religious stories and ideas found in Christianity and other major religions;
- Reflect upon the purpose and meaning of things;
- Appreciate and celebrate festivals within the school community;
- Encourage appropriate behaviour within specific social settings and gatherings and reflect on matters of right and wrong.

**Collective Worship will not:**

- Be insensitive to the cultural diversity of the school community;



- Expect children to behave in a way that undermines their personal and/or religious beliefs;
- Seek to preach or convert.

### **Parents and Carers**

- To be understanding and supportive of our aims regarding assemblies and Collective Worship;
- To support the children with any task that they may be preparing for an assembly or act of Collective Worship in School;
- To encourage and praise their child's efforts when the child is participating in an assembly or act of Collective Worship;

### **Governors**

- To appoint a designated link governor who will:
  - a) meet with the RE Subject Leader at least once a year to find out about:
    - ❖ the school's systems for planning Collective Worship, supporting staff and monitoring provision and responses;
    - ❖ the allocation, use and adequacy of resources.
  - b) visit School and talk to pupils about their experiences of Collective Worship;
  - c) promote and support the positive involvement of parents with regards to Collective Worship;
  - d) attend training and other events relating to the provision of Collective Worship;
  - e) report jointly with the Subject Leader
    - ❖ for the School Prospectus;
    - ❖ to the governing body with recommendations, if appropriate, once a year.
- To be understanding and supportive of our aims in learning and teaching through Collective Worship and review the Collective Worship Policy bi-annually.

## **Implementation of Collective Worship at Odessa Infant School**

### **1. Underlying principles**

- We are proud of the diversity of the school community and as such assemblies and acts of Collective Worship at Odessa Infant School reflect and celebrate the traditions of the major world religions, particularly those that are represented in the school and the wider community.
- Assemblies and acts of Collective Worship are therefore non-denominational and conducted in a manner which is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of the school community.
- Assemblies also reflect the achievements and learning of the children. We encourage children to participate by holding achievement assemblies and class assemblies; during which children can show their work and successes to others, and can raise issues that they have discussed in their classes. These assemblies provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school and celebrate them together. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school - that all children and their achievements are valued.

- Assemblies are regarded as a special time in the day of calm reflection and are conducted accordingly. Children are expected to behave respectfully and thoughtfully throughout any assembly or act of collective worship and are asked to come in and leave assemblies quietly.

## **2. Planning and Organisation**

- Whole school assembly is held once a week and is led by the Head teacher. Phase based assemblies are held every Monday for about 15 minutes in both key stages. Good work assembly is held every Friday in Key stage 1 and 2 to celebrate children's achievements. (Reception join in in the summer term)

## **3. Staffing**

- Assemblies are normally conducted by a member of School staff e.g. the Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher for whole school assemblies, phase leader or phase teachers for phase group assemblies or class teacher for class based acts of collective worship.
- Sometimes any of these assemblies might have contributions from or be led by visitors to the school. When we invite visitors to participate in assemblies or acts of collective worship they are expected to work within our themes and guidelines.

## **3. Assembly and Collective Worship Themes**

Where possible weekly themes will be chosen to link with specific dates within the calendar of the major world religions; notably those of the Christian and other community faiths and/or other events occurring in the wider or school community.

- Themes are very broad to allow for flexibility and variety of delivery.
- The development of the theme will be structured across the week within whole school or phase based assemblies to reflect the aims and objectives identified within this document in order to develop a broad approach and to link with a number of curriculum areas.
- On occasions staff may divert from our planned theme in order to respond to a significant news item or an important and unexpected event shared by members of the School community.

## **Acts of Collective Worship: Good Practice**

- We will always seek to make the worship appropriate to age, ability and family background of the pupils. Wherever possible we will seek to include pupils in planning and leading of acts of worship.
- Children must be engaged in a whole school, phase or class based assembly; which includes an act of Collective Worship on a daily basis.
- QCA (1999 analysis of SACRE reports) highlighted a number of characteristics of best practice in Collective Worship. New City School seeks to incorporate these into all acts of Collective Worship at the School. These include:

- a) Thorough planning; which includes the appropriateness of the acts of Collective Worship for the children concerned (i.e. age, aptitude, background);
- b) The use of themes;
- c) Children actively participating and involved in the act of worship;
- d) A built in time for the children's own reflection and if appropriate for them, to think about God. This may be a prayer, poem or guided reflection. (This part must take place for it to be Collective Worship.) Silence can allow time for individual thought and reflection, or prayer as appropriate;
- e) Clear links being identified between Collective Worship and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- f) The use of outside speakers;
- g) Affirming and expressing the school's ethos;
- h) Use of stimulus e.g. music, picture, quotation, candle, flowers. There is a need to give the children time to prepare. A well-chosen piece of music can help create an atmosphere for worship and reflection.
- i) Engaging the children e.g. the use of visual aids and artefacts will usually enable children to focus on a particular story, article, drama or message.
- j) Evaluation of Collective Worship

### Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting

- Assemblies and acts of Collective Worship are evaluated by the teacher leading the assembly in line with the criteria outlined below. Teachers need to make a judgement about the children's level of engagement and response (verbal and non-verbal) not a judgement about the delivery of the assembly content.

Outstanding	All children are fully engaged and make pertinent and thoughtful responses.
Good	All children are engaged and the majority are able to make pertinent and thoughtful responses.
Satisfactory	Most children are engaged and are able to make pertinent and thoughtful responses.
Inadequate	Few children are engaged or able to make pertinent and thoughtful responses. Any assembly held without a time for reflection will be deemed as inadequate by Ofsted.

### Inclusion

- Inclusion is about every child having educational needs that are special and the School meeting these diverse needs in order to ensure the active participation and progress of all children in their learning.

- Successful inclusive provision at Odessa Infant School is seen as the responsibility of the whole school community, permeating all aspects of school life and applicable to all our pupils. It is in this way that we will turn the rhetoric into reality.
- Inclusive practice should enable all children to participate in and develop through the provision of assemblies and Collective Worship; whatever their ability, gender, ethnic, social or cultural background, home language or any other aspect that could affect their participation in, or development.
- We attempt to be inclusive in our acts of worship and respect individual beliefs and values and maintain the integrity of all participants.

### **Right of Withdrawal from Collective Worship**

- Every effort is made to show sensitivity towards personal faiths and to include all pupils and staff in collective worship.
- However parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from acts of collective worship after consultation with the Head teacher. Alternative accommodation and supervision will be provided for the child during this period.
- Staff have the right to withdraw from acts of collective worship after consultation with the Head teacher; this needs to be agreed both verbally and in written form. Staff who withdraw from acts of collective worship will be expected to attend the remainder of any assembly when invited and to fulfil their standard duties of supervision and care of children entering and exiting any assembly.

### **Monitoring and Review**

- The Head teacher, Senior Leadership Team and RE Subject Leader will monitor the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis. The Head teacher and RE Subject Leader will report to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy at least annually and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements.

### **The Religious Education Subject Leader**

- The subject leader has a clear action plan for Religious Education over the academic year. The action plan outlines the development of RE in relation to this policy, use of resources, monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning through observations, planning and book monitoring, analysing data and managing budget. The subject leader is available to help staff to plan for religious education where required and will attend relevant courses and network meetings to keep up- to- date with local and national initiatives.