

## Collective Worship and Religious Education – Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is collective worship?**

Collective worship is a special time during the school day where pupils are given the space and opportunity to reflect, respond and revere. At Whiteley, collective worship generally takes place during the school's daily assemblies and will often include the use of music, a candle, a time of silence or a prayer to offer a focus for pupils. These assemblies may be held for pairs of year groups, a whole key stage, or in the classroom.

By law, collective worship must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. At our school, this will include the use of songs, music, stories and readings familiar to those of a Christian faith, and promoting the values that Christians believe to be important. These may, and often are, values held to be important by other faiths as well and as such, the use of stories from other faiths, along with stories of a moral nature, are included as part of our assembly themes.

### **What is covered during RE lessons?**

The school follows the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus for RE which is entitled 'Living Difference'. The agreed syllabus follows the legal requirement for religious education to reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

At Whiteley Primary School, pupils study Christian RE topics in every year group. In addition, pupils learn about Hinduism in Key Stage 1, Judaism in lower key stage 2, and Islam in upper key stage 2. (Please see the link below for the overview of topics taught.) Pupils are taught about the main traditions, practices and beliefs of the religions, but will also have the opportunity to relate the key concepts covered to their own experiences and explore their own beliefs and questions of meaning. Each year group has a different RE unit of work every half term.

### **When is RE taught?**

At Whiteley Primary, we follow a themed approach to the curriculum, blocking subjects together to make meaningful links for pupils. As a result, RE is not necessarily taught for a set period each week, but may be taught in longer sessions over a shorter timescale, enabling pupils to spend quality time exploring a key concept and where appropriate linking work to other areas of the curriculum.

For example, in Y6 pupils learn about the symbolism of the Magi's gifts in the Christmas story. RE is linked to literacy work about 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' and the work is blocked in the final two weeks of the Autumn term.

### **What should I do if I want to withdraw my child from RE or collective worship?**

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from all or parts of RE or collective worship. If you are considering exercising your parental right of withdrawal, we would ask that you contact the Headteacher to discuss the elements of RE or collective worship which you would like your child to be withdrawn from and the practical implications of withdrawal. The headteacher can also give further information about collective worship/RE to enable you to make an informed decision. Please note that parents are only able to withdraw pupils from the RE curriculum and not aspects of the National Curriculum which may have a religious link (i.e. the use of a religious story in Literacy; learning about the religion of the Ancient Greeks in History).

### **What happens to my child if they are withdrawn?**

Parents may agree for their child to be present during collective worship, but not take an active part in the act of worship. Alternatively, they may be excused from the part of the assembly which contains the act of worship. In these circumstances they would be supervised in a central area of the school. They would be required to attend assemblies held for purposes other than collective worship.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure pupils are supervised. This may be a central area in the school or in a different classroom, and will be agreed through discussion between the parents and the headteacher. During the time they are withdrawn, pupils must be set work linked to their own family's beliefs or values, but the school is not expected to provide this additional work and therefore parents should provide appropriate activities for pupils through discussion with the headteacher. Pupils are not permitted to spend additional time on other areas of the National Curriculum whilst they are withdrawn from RE.