



Ottery St Mary Primary School

Collective Worship Policy Statement

2025-26



INTRODUCTION

Although Ottery St Mary lies in a part of Devon that is predominantly Christian in faith and culture, the school recognises the fact that Great Britain as a whole is much more cosmopolitan and as such the school will provide learning opportunities that will assist our children as they widen their understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion through life in a multicultural society.

Act of Collective Worship : *Legal Requirements*

- Headteachers in community schools must consult the governors but are themselves responsible for arranging acts of worship and ensuring that they take place even if, on grounds of conscience, they absent themselves.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship.
- Teachers, including headteachers, have the same right of withdrawal.
- In community schools, collective worship is to be wholly or mainly Christian and not to be distinctive of any denomination.
- Collective worship should be broadly Christian and for this to be so it should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief.
- In providing acts of collective worship the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the children should be taken into account.
- A whole school or part of a school can be excused from acts of collective worship, which are “wholly or mainly Christian” but not from daily worship. This dispensation can only be granted by the Devon Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE).

Schools should be aware of the guidance on collective worship. The main points are summarised below :-

- Collective worship should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs.
- 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.
- An act of worship need not contain only Christian material. It must, however, contain some elements which relate specifically to the traditions of Christian belief and which accorded a special status to Jesus Christ.

AIMS

Schools should provide opportunities for :

1. Adoration offered by believers to the Supreme Being.
2. Concerns, concepts, principles, conduct worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.
3. Acts of collective worship should be seen as part of the whole school curriculum and not the sole responsibility of any one area.
4. Acts of worship should be conducted within an educational context. It therefore follows that evangelism (an attempt to persuade the participants to adopt a particular religious belief) is inappropriate.

The act of worship in community schools should allow people of different (or of no) religious beliefs to be included. However, the underlying principles of Christian belief encompass, for example, the

importance of ideals common to all humanity – of love, joy, peace, hope, truth, trust, forgiveness, service, compassion, justice, respect for individuals, respect for life, personal and social responsibility. These fundamentals of Christianity should be addressed in such a way as to enable the whole school community to maintain its integrity.

The act of worship should be seen as part of the whole school curriculum. It is therefore an excellent cross-curricular opportunity. It follows that, like other parts of the curriculum, it should be an intentional learning experience, which requires planning, resourcing, preparing and evaluating. It is an opportunity for a focal point, a sharing of classroom and departmental work across the larger group and to provide opportunities for :

- the whole community to celebrate
- sharing and experiencing difficulties
- building a sense of group identity
- encouraging a sense of personal and social responsibility
- a break from the busyness of life (for stillness and quiet)
- learning how to behave in a large social group
- learning how to perform in front of an audience
- learning how to respond to a performance
- making visible the school's leadership
- developing inner awareness
- exploring feelings and emotions

PURPOSE

The Act of worship should seek to:

- Reflect, express, affirm or challenge commonly accepted personal and social values
- Provide experiences so that those with a commitment to a religious life may worship adequately without violating the integrity of those without a religious commitment
- Provide experiences for those not committed to religious beliefs without violating the integrity of those who have religious beliefs

Schools should sensitively try to evoke those senses and feelings from which it might be said that worship most naturally arises :

- sense of beauty
- sense of wonder and awe
- feeling of pride
- sense of pity
- sense of smallness in the face of greatness
- sense of grandness in the face of smallness
- feeling of shared sadness
- sense of shared loss
- sense of shared happiness
- sense of peace
- sense of thankfulness
- sense of stillness in the midst of a busy existence

GOOD PRACTICE

Effective acts of collective worship :

- are conducted within an educational context
- exploit the excellent cross-curricular opportunities provided
- recognise the wide variety of backgrounds from which pupils come
- are inclusive, i.e. allow people of different (or no) religious beliefs to be included
- involve active participation of pupils and other members of the school community
- are part of a programme which has allowed for appropriate planning time
- take place, whenever possible, in an inspiring atmosphere
- employ a variety of methods of delivery and media
- include visiting speakers and groups. It should be emphasised however, that all who lead worship should have the opportunity to read the school's policy and are fully briefed by the co-ordinator for, or teacher responsible for, the act of worship.

Appendix 1:

Collective Worship and Singing Together 2025-26

This document outlines our approach to collective worship and singing together for 2025-26. It includes weekly themes, song suggestions which may be covered in Singing Together, and ideas for class-based collective worship, all designed to support a reflective, inclusive and values-led school culture.

There is a statutory duty for a daily act of collective worship, which we fulfil through a combination of whole key stage assemblies and class-based sessions. On days when we are not gathering in our key stages, class collective worship must still take place—this might be a short reflective conversation at the end of the day, a story, a moment of silence, or a discussion linked to current events. The weekly themes are often a helpful way to frame these moments.

Our school rules (Respect, Care, Listen) are woven throughout the year's themes, and our termly celebration values (Explore, Challenge, Learn) are also reflected in the content of assemblies and song choices.

The weekly structure is as follows:

Tuesday Morning Assemblies (9:15–9:30)

KS1 in the Dance Studio

KS2 in the Hall

Singing Assemblies

Wednesday 3:00pm – KS1 (Dance Studio)

Thursday 3:00pm – KS2 (Hall)

This document also includes suggestions for class worship activities, including books, discussion prompts, and links to important calendar events. We hope this forms a useful resource to ensure people are able to prioritise daily collective worship.

Assembly weekly themes Autumn 1 2025

Week	Theme for the week	KS1 assembly (Tue AM)	KS2 assembly (Tue AM)	Singing Assembly Possible Songs
1.9.25	New beginnings	Say Goodbye, Say Hello – Cori Doerrfeld	What helps you feel confident?	Don't Worry Be Happy / Can't Stop The Feeling
Class assembly	Create a class time capsule with dreams and ambitions for the end of the year. Read 'Meesha Makes Friends' – ebook in folder.			
8.9.25	Respect, Care, Listen (Rules focus)	On Sudden Hill (How do the school rules help us make friends?)	Why are these our school rules?	Don't Worry Be Happy / Can't Stop The Feeling
Class assembly	Imagine what might happen if no one followed the rules for a day – how would it affect our school? Generate a class charter or examples of how we will show the school rules of Respect Care and Listen. Read 'Do Unto Otters' or 'The Book of Rules' – see ebooks in folder			
15.9.25	Perseverance	Flight School	What helps us keep going when things are tough?	Don't Worry Be Happy / Can't Stop The Feeling
Class assembly	Try a perseverance class challenge such as 'count to 20' Look out for examples of perseverance during the week and celebrate them with one another Read 'That fruit is mine' – Ebook in folder			
22.9.25	Harvest and community	Pumpkin soup	How does the Larder support our community?	Peace Will Come / Can't Stop..
Class assembly	Make a web of connections within the community – identify how we all depend on one another (farms, shops, friends, etc etc). Share the folk story 'Stone Soup' or other community themed story			
29.9.25	Democracy	Sofia Valdez Prez	What does it mean to have a voice?	Peace Will Come / Don't Worry
Class assembly	Vote for an end of week activity, add an element of democracy to class decision making linked to topics Discuss the role of the school councilors. Or share this folktale from Indonesia The Heaviest Burden – The Earth Stories Collection			
6.10.25	Mental health awareness	Ruby Finds a Worry	How can we take care of our mental health?	Something Inside So Strong (Black History) / Peace Will Come
Class assembly	Talk about the emotions check in boards and how they help, consider discussing the 5 point scale Practice some grounding / breathing exercises from GoNoodle			
13.10.25	Kindness	Have you filled a bucket today? Or The Green Umbrella	How does kindness make a difference?	Something Inside So Strong (Black History) / Don't Worry
Class assembly	Create a compliments chain – a paperchain where every link has a compliment written on it Consider a random acts of kindness challenge			
20.10.25	'Explore'	Look Up – Nathan Bryon	What have we discovered this half term?	Something Inside So Strong (Black History) / Don't Worry
Class assembly	Have a mystery object box – ask questions to identify what's in the box – consider an item which is linked to the theme of discovery			

Assembly weekly themes Autumn 2 2025

Week beginning	Theme for the week	KS1 assembly picture book (Tue AM)	KS2 assembly theme (Tue AM)	Singing Assembly Possible Songs
3.11.25	Tar Barrels / Fireworks	Eg video of tarbarrels (unrelated, but 'Wild' by Emily Hughes in EYFS)	Eg video talk prompt	<i>(To the tune of London's Burning)</i> Ottery's burning, Ottery's burning, Barrels rolling, barrels rolling, Brave the embers brave the embers, Shout and cheer, and never fear!
Class assembly	Why is Tar Barrels important for our town?			
10.11.25	Anti-Bullying Week "Power For Good" (Children in Need 15 th)	Kindness Grows – Britta Teckentrup	How can we be a power for good?	Don't Give Up, Try Everything / Something Inside
Class assembly	Ripples of respect – drop pebbles into a bowl of water to represent acts of kindness / respect – discuss how they can have a wider impact			
17.11.25	Friendship	A Better Best Friend Olivier Tallec	What makes a good friend?	Don't Give Up, Try Everything / Sing Up Christmas
Class assembly	Make a 'recipe' for a good friend			
24.11.25	Compassion / Tolerance	Beneath – Cori Doerrfeld	How do we show compassion to each other?	Don't Give Up, Try Everything / Sing Up Christmas
Class assembly	'Step into their shoes' discuss scenarios about people experiencing difficulty. Imagine how they might feel and generate compassionate responses – consider linking to relevant examples from your class.			
1.12.25	Advent	Pick A Pine Tree	Why is waiting important, and how can we do it well?	Sing up it's Christmas! /
Class assembly	Create a class kindness calendar – counting down to the holiday with class acts of kindness. Consider a 'moment of reflection' with a candle			
8.12.25	Hannukah (14th - 22nd)	Sammy Spider's First Hannukah	Why are winter festivals celebrated with light?	Christmas Songs
Class assembly	Explore different winter festivals from different cultures			
15.12.25	'Challenge'	The Cow Who Climbed A Tree	How have we challenged ourselves this half term?	Christmas Songs
Class assembly	Give the class a challenge such as building a tower with one marshmallow and spaghetti sticks.			

Assembly weekly themes Spring 1 2026

Week beginning	Theme for the week	KS1 assembly picture book (Tuesday AM)	KS2 assembly theme (Tuesday AM)	Singing Assembly Possible Songs
5.1.16	Resolutions	We Are Together – B. Teckentrup	What kind of goals are meaningful to set for yourself?	This is Me, Thank You For A Million Brilliant Things
Class assembly	Share your resolutions – make paper airplanes with them written on for a display (fly into 2026?)			
12.1.26	Respect, Care, Listen ('Safe' – linked to care)	Be Kind - Pat Zietlow	How can we show our school rules?	This is Me, Thank You For A Million Brilliant Things
Class assembly	Freeze frame drama activity demonstrating how we might 'see' the value of 'care' in our school			
19.1.26	Inspirational people	Inspirational people in our community	Inspirational people in our community	In me Trust, Count on Me
Class assembly	'Guess who' or '20 questions' game from a selection of inspirational ppl either generated as a class or chosen by the teacher. Consider making this into a week long game along the lines of 'celebrity' Celebrity (game) - Wikipedia			
26.1.26	In Me I Trust (Positive mindset)	Troll Frances Stickley & Stefano Martinuz	In Me I Trust assembly from Singup	In Me I Trust assembly from Singup
Class assembly	Follow up resources from 'In Me I Trust' – see Singup			
2.2.26	Safer internet day (10 th Feb)	Troll Stinks	SMART rules recap	Online Safety Songs from Singup
Class assembly	Safer internet day materials as produced			
9.2.26	'Learn'	The Dot – Peter Reynolds	What have we learned this half term?	In Me I Trust, Online Safety Songs
Class assembly	What have we learned this half term? What do you know now that you didn't know in December?			

Assembly weekly themes Spring 2 2026

Week beginning	Theme for the week	KS1 assembly picture book (Tue AM)	KS2 assembly theme (Tue AM)	Singing Assembly Possible Songs
23.2.26	Ramadan (18th -)	Lailah's Lunchbox	Why do religions have periods of fasting before celebration?	Reach Out (I'll be there), Three Little Birds
Class assembly	How does fasting help people feel closer to their religious values? What might make this a challenge?			
2.3.26	World Book Day 5th March	WBD Materials The Book Eating Boy / Dog Loves Books	WBD materials	Reach Out (I'll Be There), Three Little Birds
Class assembly	WBD materials / share your favourite childhood story with your class			
9.3.26	British Science Week	BSW materials Ada Twist Scientist	BSW materials	Reach Out (I'll Be There), Three Little Birds
Class assembly	BSW materials			
16.3.26	Poetry Day (21 st March)	My Heart Is A Poem	Poetry day resources	Reach Out / Words Are Ours
Class assembly	Watch poets performing such as Benjamin Zephaniah / M Rosen. Share your favourite poem. Challenge your class to learn and recite a poem.			
23.3.26	Perseverance	I Will Swim Next Time – Emily Joof	What can we achieve if we persevere?	Words Are Ours April Shower
Class assembly	Try some class challenges such as picking up beans with chopsticks or tongue twisters			
30.3.26	'Explore'	Izzy Gizmo – Pip Jones	What ideas have we explored this term?	April Shower / Words Are Ours
Class assembly	Consider the questions you have explored in your topic and science– what answers do we have now that we didn't have at the start of the term?			

Assembly weekly themes Summer 1 2026

Week beginning	Theme for the week	KS1 assembly picture book (Tue AM)	KS2 assembly theme (Tue AM)	Singing Assembly Possible Songs
20.4.26	Earth Day	Dear Earth or Tidy (Emily Gravett)	How can we protect our local environment?	Ottery Song (CoD) / April Shower
Class assembly	Challenge class to spend time outdoors, looking for signs of wildlife, considering how we can protect our environment. Share ideas			
27.4.26	Festival of Music	The diddle that dummed	Celebrating music	N/A (Festival of music) / Ottery Song
Class assembly	Learn a song (consider 'I Once Saw an Elephant' on SingUp)			
4.5.26	Respect, Care, Listen (Respect focus)	Sometimes I Am Furious- Timothy Knapman		I Love The Flowers / Feeling Good / Ottery Song
Class assembly	Say something respectful / kind as you go around the class circle – read 'Kindness Grows' by Brita Teckentrup			
11.5.26	Making mistakes	Yes, You Can Cow!		I Love The Flowers / Feeling Good / Ottery Song
Class assembly	Celebrate the 'Oops' awards – people award themselves for mistakes they have learned from			
18.5.26	'Challenge' (World Play Fair Day 19th)	Giraffes Can't Dance – Challenge yourself!	Celebration of dance – being brave and supporting your team	I Love The Flowers / Feeling Good
Class assembly	Discuss how the class feel ahead of Celebration of Dance, share positive affirmations about working together and challenging ourselves – Consider 'World Fair Play Day' resources.			

Assembly weekly themes Summer2 2026

Week beginning	Theme for the week	KS1 assembly picture book (Tuesday AM)	KS2 assembly theme (Tuesday AM)	Singing Assembly Possible Songs
1.6.26	Teamwork	Swimmy – Leo Lionni	What makes a team successful?	Lean on me / Try Everything
Class assembly	Silent line up challenge – line up from tallest to shortest, alphabetically, by birthday etc. Celebrate how they could achieve this with non-verbal communication and teamwork. Also consider playing 'silentball' in older year groups.			
8.6.26	Empathy week (see Empathy Lab resources)	Beneath – Cori Doerrfeld	What does it mean to have empathy?	Lean on Me / Try Everything
Class assembly	'Stand in their shoes' – discuss scenarios and taking different perspectives / how things might feel different for different people – consider Empathy lab resources			
15.6.26	Winning losing and taking part	I Really Want To Win – Simon Phillip or The Frog Olympics – Brian Moses	How do we show respect in competition?	How Far I'll Go / Try Everything
Class assembly	Share a class 'When I Tried My Best' trophy as a talking object, where pupils share stories of where they didn't give up or where they were happy to take part even if they didn't win.			
22.6.26	Sharing our worries	Ruby's Worry – Tom Percival	What does 'A problem shared is a problem halved' mean?	How Far I'll Go / A Million Dreams
Class assembly	Consider this assembly SPCK Assemblies - We Can Work It Out (without the prayer)			
29.6.26	Changing and Moving On	Pip and Egg	How does change make us feel?	A Million Dreams / How Far I'll Go
Class assembly	Memory ball – throw a ball / beanbag and ask to share a happy memory from this year. Repeat but with aims for next year			
6.7.26	Aspirations	Dream Big, Little One – Vashti Harrison	What would you like to achieve and why?	A Million Dreams, Lean on Me, How Far I'll Go
Class assembly	Make a dream hat which represents a career or hope for the future – or could be paper rosette – pupils to mingle and find out what one another's aspirations are			
13.7.26	'Learn'	The Bear and The Piano	What have we learned that we will take forward into our next year?	How Far I'll Go / A Million Dreams / Lean On Me
Class assembly	Learning carousel – ask pupils to find a piece of work they are proud of this work and display it on their table. Pupils to complete a walking gallery celebrating one another's work.			

Songs Covered in Singing Together Last Academic Year

*Denotes from SingUp

KS1	KS2
*Wiggle Your Fingers If You're Happy And You Know It *Jumping Up And Down *Shake My Sillies Out Rubber Chicken Boom Chikka Boom Thank You Lord Praise Him *Count On Me *Thank You For A Million Brilliant Things *This Little Light He's Got The Whole World *You've Got A Friend Do your ears hang low? Ottery Song (Chorus)	He's Got The Whole World *Count On Me *Thank-You For A Million Brilliant Things Praise Him *Build It High Allelu Allelu *Drop In The Ocean *Believe Rejoice In The Lord Seek Ye First *Thank Your Lucky Stars *Bare Necessities *This Little Light *I Wanna Be Like You I'm Going To Paint A Perfect Picture *You've Got A Friend *Raise Your Voice Ottery Song *3 Little Birds Thank-You Lord *We're All In This Together Cauliflowers Fluffy *Whatever I Do *One and a Million