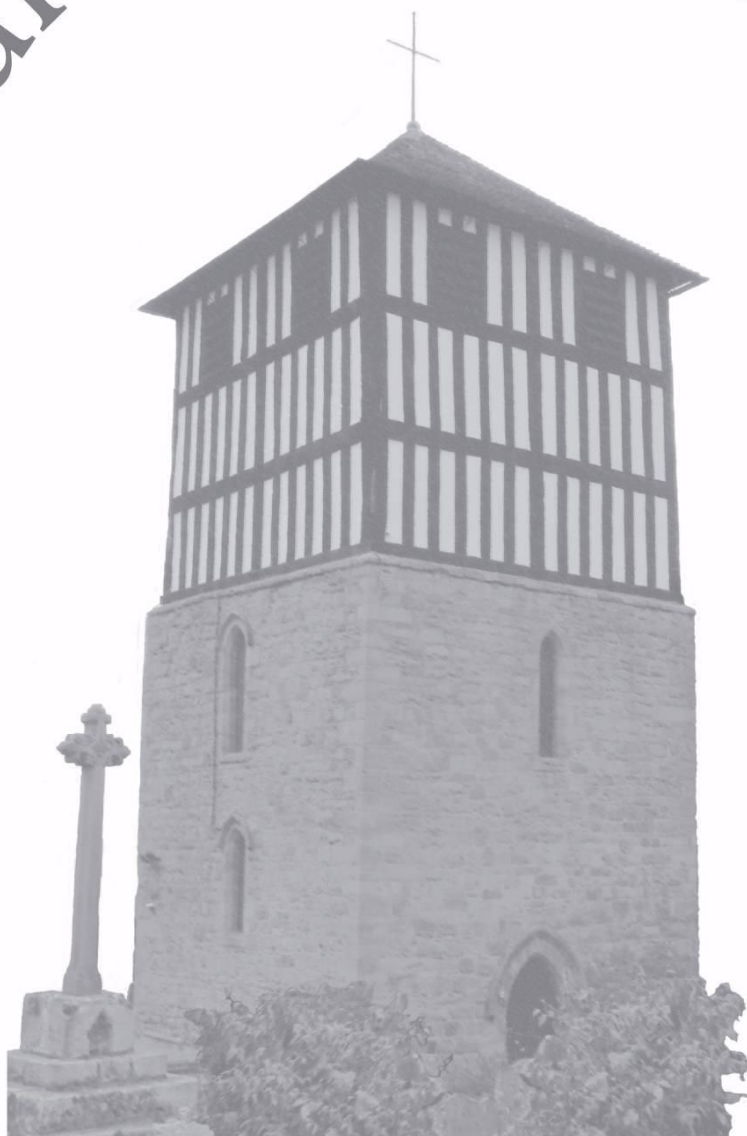


Holmer Church of England Academy



Holmer C of E Academy Spiritual Development Policy

Written: April 2023

Next Review Date: April 2026

Holmer Church of England Academy Spirituality Policy

Vision

At Holmer Church of England Academy, our vision is to “*Inspire us all to create a better world*”, a vision grounded in the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:13-15, “*You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world.*” We believe that each member of our school community has the potential to bring light to the world and positively transform it, and we are committed to nurturing the spiritual development of all our pupils and staff as part of this mission.

Definition of Spirituality

At Holmer, spirituality is the deep sense of wonder and curiosity about life, the world, and our place within it. It encompasses a personal journey of reflection, self-awareness, and connection with others, underpinned by our Christian values and ethos. We recognise that spirituality is not confined to religious belief but is a broad human experience accessible to all, regardless of faith or belief.

Opportunities for Spiritual Development

Holmer Academy provides a rich variety of opportunities for pupils to grow spiritually, both in structured settings and through everyday experiences. We aim to create an environment that allows all pupils to explore life’s big questions, discover their inner strengths, and reflect on their values and actions.

- **Collective Worship:** Our daily collective worship is central to the life of our school. Daily acts of worship allow time for reflection, prayer, and contemplation on Christian teachings, especially how pupils can be the "salt and light" of the world in their daily lives.
- **Religious Education (RE):** RE at Holmer encourages pupils to engage critically with religious and philosophical questions, reflect on their beliefs and values, and appreciate diverse perspectives. It plays a key role in promoting understanding, tolerance, and respect for others.
- **Curriculum-wide Spiritual Reflection:** We embed spiritual development across the curriculum, encouraging moments of awe and wonder in all subjects. Whether it’s contemplating the beauty of nature in science, reflecting on justice in history, or exploring creativity in art, we inspire pupils to reflect on deeper meanings and their place in the world.
- **Weekly Big Questions:** Our weekly *Big Questions* initiative invites pupils to explore profound and sometimes challenging questions, encouraging reflection, discussion, and personal growth. These questions spark curiosity and inspire critical thinking, giving pupils opportunities to wonder about life, morality, and their role in creating a better world.

Pupil Leadership and Spirituality

We believe that spirituality is nurtured through service to others, leadership, and active participation in community life. Our wide range of pupil leadership committees allows pupils to explore and express their spirituality in practical and meaningful ways:

- **Digital Leaders** promote responsible and ethical use of technology, fostering a sense of trust, respect, and stewardship over the digital world.

- **Eco-Committee** members demonstrate their commitment to God's creation through environmental initiatives, aligning with our value of justice and our collective responsibility to care for the Earth.
- **Storytellers** help bring stories of courage, compassion, and perseverance to life, fostering a love of narrative that connects to spiritual growth.
- **Worship Committee** pupils play a key role in planning and leading acts of worship, encouraging a deeper connection with Christian teachings and collective reflection.
- **Peer Mentors** and **Sports Leaders** embody service and friendship, supporting their peers emotionally, spiritually, and physically in their school journey.
- **Pupil Council** provides a forum for pupils to voice their ideas and concerns, rooted in the values of truthfulness, respect, and justice.
- **Social Justice Group** actively engages in promoting fairness and equality, inspiring pupils to live out the values of courage, service, and justice.

Through these roles, pupils grow in confidence, learn to reflect on their responsibilities to others, and develop leadership qualities that will help them be lights in the world.

Spiritual Spaces and Reflection

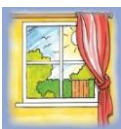
Holmer's **Spiritual Garden**, designed and created by our pupils, offers a quiet, reflective space for all to pause and contemplate. This garden is a testament to our belief in pupil leadership and creativity, and it provides a physical space where the values of generosity, thankfulness, and peace are embodied. Pupils are encouraged to use this space for personal reflection, think about our big question, prayer, or simply to reconnect with nature and their own spiritual journey.

Embedding Christian Values in Spiritual Growth

Our spirituality policy is rooted in the Christian values of **courage, justice, trust, friendship, generosity, respect, compassion, forgiveness, thankfulness, perseverance, service, and truthfulness**. These values are woven throughout the curriculum and daily life at Holmer, shaping the spiritual development of each pupil. We aim to create a school community where everyone feels valued and supported in their personal and spiritual growth.

Mirrors, Windows, and Doors: A Framework for Spiritual Development

At Holmer Academy, we follow Liz Mills' *Windows, Mirrors, and Doors* framework to plan for and encourage spiritual growth:



- **Windows:** These provide opportunities for pupils to see the world in new ways, inspiring awe and wonder. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on life's "wows" (the amazing) and "ows" (the challenging).



- **Mirrors:** These offer pupils time for reflection. By meditating on life's big questions and considering different perspectives, pupils learn about life's fullness by looking inward and outward.



- **Doors:** These encourage pupils to respond creatively to their reflections, translating their thoughts into actions. Pupils are empowered to live out their values and beliefs through practical, meaningful responses.

Spiritual growth is a transformative journey, marked by learning (Windows), deep reflection (Mirrors), and action (Doors), allowing pupils to engage fully with new experiences and apply them in life.

Inclusive Spirituality for All

While our spirituality is shaped by our Christian foundation, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of faith, feel included in our spiritual journey. We believe that every individual has the capacity for spiritual reflection and growth, and our school offers a safe, inclusive environment where pupils from all backgrounds can explore their spirituality in their own way.

Spiritual Capacities We Nurture

To support holistic spiritual development, we focus on nurturing the following human capacities:

- **Beliefs:** Encouraging the development of personal and religious beliefs, understanding how these beliefs shape identity and influence one's life.
- **Awe and Wonder:** Inspiring appreciation for the beauty of the world, its mysteries, and human achievement.
- **Transcendence:** Providing moments for pupils to experience a sense of rising above everyday life, through silence, prayer, or reflection.
- **Search for Meaning:** Supporting pupils in reflecting on life's purpose and their responses to hardship, suffering, or joy.
- **Self-Knowledge:** Developing pupils' awareness of their thoughts, feelings, and identity, fostering inner strength and resilience.
- **Relationships:** Encouraging empathy, thankfulness, and the value of building positive relationships with others.
- **Creativity:** Providing outlets for expressing deep thoughts and emotions, through art, drama, poetry, and music.
- **Feelings and Emotions:** Teaching pupils to understand their emotions, control them when needed, and grow from them. Our relational behaviour policy is based on the evidenced based framework of ARC (Attachment Research Centre). We praise positive behaviours and hold private restorative conversations when needed.

Staff Development and Role Modelling

Our staff are instrumental in fostering spiritual growth and are trained to understand and nurture spirituality in all pupils. They model the values we hold dear and support pupils in reflecting on their own beliefs and actions. Staff are encouraged to use their own spiritual and reflective practices as examples to inspire the children.

Spirituality Across the Curriculum

Spiritual development is not limited to worship or RE. Each subject offers opportunities for reflection, wonder, and growth. For instance:

- In **Literacy**: pupils explore themes like empathy, kindness, and the wonder of the natural world through stories and poetry. Texts that delve into different cultures, beliefs, and moral dilemmas can prompt discussions about values, respect, and self-reflection. Creative writing tasks can encourage pupils to express their own thoughts and feelings about life's big questions. Additionally, reading stories with characters who demonstrate compassion or face ethical challenges helps pupils to connect with deeper meanings and consider their own perspectives on spirituality and life.
- In **Science**: pupils encounter spirituality by exploring the wonders of the natural world, from the vastness of space to the complexity of living organisms. Investigating topics like life cycles, ecosystems, and the universe fosters awe, curiosity, and reflection on life's deeper questions. Pupils can reflect on ethical issues, such as environmental responsibility, and develop a sense of stewardship. The scientific process encourages perseverance, respect for evidence, and the search for truth, linking to spiritual values. By engaging with science, pupils gain a greater appreciation for the world and their place within it.
- In **Maths**: pupils can experience spirituality through the awe of discovering patterns, shapes, and the order of the natural world. Exploring concepts like infinity or symmetry fosters wonder and curiosity. Problem-solving encourages perseverance and resilience, while collaboration nurtures a sense of community. Pupils can reflect on ethical questions, such as fairness in statistics, or the importance of accuracy and truthfulness. By engaging with the beauty and logic of maths, pupils develop a deeper appreciation for the world's structure, promoting self-awareness and a sense of connection to something greater than themselves.
- In **PE**: pupils experience spirituality through teamwork, perseverance, and self-reflection. Physical challenges encourage them to push their limits, building resilience and self-awareness. Working together in team sports fosters a sense of community, empathy, and respect for others. Pupils can reflect on fairness, sportsmanship, and the emotions tied to success and failure. The beauty of movement, whether in dance or gymnastics, promotes a sense of awe and appreciation for the human body. Through these experiences, pupils develop inner strength, gratitude, and a deeper connection to themselves and others.
- In **History**: pupils encounter spirituality by exploring key events, individuals, and cultures, reflecting on themes like justice, courage, and morality. Studying historical figures and their values encourages empathy and personal reflection. Pupils can engage with big questions about human purpose, suffering, and hope, linking past events to their own lives. Visits to historical sites or handling artefacts foster awe and wonder, while discussions about different belief systems deepen understanding of diverse spiritual perspectives. Through these

experiences, pupils reflect on their identity, values, and the shared human experience across time.

- In **Music**: spirituality is nurtured through awe, reflection, and creativity. Pupils experience wonder by exploring diverse music, express emotions through composing and improvisation, and reflect on their feelings and the world. Group singing and ensemble work foster community, while listening to music from different cultures promotes empathy and understanding of spiritual traditions. Music lessons also connect to the school's values and Big Questions, encouraging self-awareness, gratitude, and emotional growth. Through these activities, pupils deepen their spiritual development, gaining insights into themselves, others, and the wider world.

Why Spiritual Development Matters

As a Church of England school, we believe spiritual development is as important as academic learning. It helps pupils to think for themselves, to reflect on their place in the world, and to engage meaningfully with life's ultimate questions. Spiritual development equips them to become responsible, fulfilled, and emotionally engaged members of society, living in alignment with our values of **courage, respect, love, and joy**.

Monitoring and Evaluating Spiritual Development

The spiritual development of our pupils is regularly monitored and evaluated through:

- **Feedback from pupil leadership committees:** The **Worship Committee, Pupil Council**, and other groups play a vital role in gathering student insights into the effectiveness of spiritual initiatives.
- **Reflection and dialogue:** Staff, pupils, and parents are invited to reflect on the impact of worship, RE, and other opportunities for spiritual development.
- **Self-evaluation:** Pupils are encouraged to engage in self-reflection, considering how the school's values and spiritual activities have influenced their personal growth and well-being.

Spirituality and Well-being

Spirituality at Holmer Academy is closely linked to emotional well-being and mental health. We believe that providing pupils with opportunities to reflect, connect with their values, and find meaning in their experiences contributes significantly to their overall well-being. Through quiet reflection, participation in leadership, and engagement with the spiritual garden, our pupils learn how to cultivate inner peace, resilience, and a sense of purpose.

In all that we do, we are guided by our vision of inspiring each other to create a better world, just as Jesus calls us to be salt and light. We are proud to foster an environment where spiritual growth is nurtured, values are lived out, and every pupil is encouraged to be a positive force for change in the world.