

Open Academy

Spirituality Policy

Courage in every step, faith in every journey

Policy Type:	Academy Policy
Approved By:	Full Governing Board
Date Approved by LGB:	September 2026
Review Date:	September 2027
Person Responsible:	Principal

Summary of Changes

The policy has been amended as follows.

Page Ref.	Section	Amendment	Date of Change
All	New Policy	First issue of the Spirituality Policy	Sept 2026

General Policy Roles and Accountabilities

The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) is accountable for all policies across its Academies. All policies, whether relating to an individual Academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our ethos and values as articulated in our prospectus. We are committed to the provision of high-quality education in the context of the Christian values of service, thankfulness and humility where individuals are valued, aspirations are high, hope is nurtured, and talents released.

A Scheme of Delegation for each Academy sets out the responsibilities of the Local Governing Body and Principal. The Principal of each Academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Academy Trust.

All employees of the Academy Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

OUR VISION

Our vision – Courage in every step, faith in every journey – is drawn from one of the most powerful moments in the Gospels. In Matthew 14:22–33, Jesus walks across stormy waters towards his disciples, who are afraid. In that moment of fear and uncertainty, he speaks words that have echoed through centuries:

“Take courage. Do not be afraid – I am here.” **Matthew 14:27**

Trusting in those words, Peter steps out of the boat. He walks on water – not because the storm has passed, but because his eyes are fixed on Christ. It is a story about what becomes possible when we choose courage over comfort, and faith over fear; and a story about storms, and the unwavering hope that we are never alone within them.

This vision influences the ethos of Open Academy and the policies and practices within it. We believe that spirituality is a core thread running through our school, and we attach great importance to it for both pupils' development and for the growth and well-being of everyone in our community. It sits alongside our core values of Aspiration, Perseverance and Respect, and our secondary scripture:

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” **John 10:10**

We serve a community that, for many, has known real hardship. We know that raising ambition – daring to believe in what is possible – takes genuine courage, and that stepping out of the boat requires trust: in yourself, in those around you, and in something greater. Our task, as a school, is to walk alongside every pupil and adult in our community and say, as Jesus said to Peter: you can do this, and you do not walk alone.

We aim for pupils, and adults, to grow in their ability to:

- be guided by their beliefs and values, and be willing to take a stand to defend them
- be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community
- love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges
- exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world, and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder
- be intrigued by mystery and open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life
- be comfortable with stillness and silence, and open to engage in reflection, meditation or prayer
- be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves, and to forgive others
- be willing to take risks, and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success
- demonstrate curiosity and open-mindedness when exploring life's big questions
- appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life, such as friends and family, and show generosity towards others

(Adapted from David Smith's work on Spiritual Capacities)

OUR WORKING DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY

As a staff and governor team, we have agreed a definition of spiritual development to support us as we talk about spirituality at Open Academy:

“Something more to life than meets the eye, something more than the material, something more than the obvious, something to wonder at, something to respond to.” **Terence Copley**

At Open Academy, we understand this as the same sense of wonder that must have drawn Peter's eyes past the storm and towards Christ: an awareness that there is more to life than what is immediately seen, measured or explained. Spiritual development is not about pupils or staff becoming 'more spiritual' in a measurable sense; it is about becoming increasingly aware of a natural, innate spirituality that all of us carry, and growing in the courage to explore it.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 78 of the Education Act 2002 states that the curriculum for a maintained school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

As a Church of England secondary school within the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT), Open Academy is inspected under the SIAMS Schedule (amended September 2021), which references spirituality in both the RE and Collective Worship strands, with the main focus within Strand 2: Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills. The Church of England Vision for Education holds a core desire for 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10), which requires educating the whole person.

The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework states that pupils' spiritual development is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

HOW WE SUPPORT PUPILS IN THEIR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- providing opportunities for spiritual development in Collective Worship, led throughout the year by staff, pupils and our Chaplain
- providing opportunities for spiritual development within Religious Education
- providing opportunities for spiritual development across the wider curriculum, with subject leaders identifying and sharing opportunities for awe, wonder and reflection in their own subjects
- capturing opportunities for awe and wonder as they arise, in and beyond the classroom
- providing Sacred Spaces in classrooms, public spaces and outside, drawing on the 'Prayer Spaces in School' website
- offering pupils opportunities to develop their own spiritual leadership, including leading Collective Worship and volunteering as Student Chaplains

AS A STAFF TEAM

- We have a shared staff understanding of spiritual development, and revisit this as an area for consideration in staff meetings and training.
- We have a culture at Open Academy that recognises the importance of spirituality to individuals, both pupils and staff.
- Our governors monitor the impact of our spirituality focus through our LGB Committee, learning walks.

- We have staff guidance accessible to support this aspect of our curriculum, drawing on DNEAT and diocesan resources on spiritual development.
- We ensure new staff are aware of this policy as part of induction.
- We use models to support our own thinking on spirituality.
- We have spiritual spaces around our school building, such as 'Open Ark'.
- We are aware of spiritual development shown across four key areas: Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond (Rickett/Nye), and use the 'Ricketts Grids' to support our understanding of progression within them.
- We recognise that pupils will have different Spiritual Temperaments or Sacred Pathways (Gary Thomas, 2010; Myra Perrine, 2007), and this influences our planning as we nurture spirituality across the curriculum, not just in RE and Collective Worship.
- We encourage staff who are specialist subject leads to identify opportunities for spiritual development in their subject and to share these with colleagues.
- We actively use language agreed with staff – including our vision, Courage in every step, faith in every journey, and our values of Aspiration, Perseverance and Respect – to nurture pupils' awareness of spirituality and its importance to well-being and development.
- We help each pupil develop a spiritual understanding in terms of their own cultural context, recognising the real hardship many in our community have known, and the courage it takes to raise ambition in response.
- We share the outcomes of our focus on spiritual development with parents and carers, wherever possible, through our weekly Family Bulletin "The Open Way", social media, displays and our website.
- We discuss spirituality with our parish church, DNEAT and others who can further support this thread.
- We use posters, displays and other visual reminders – including our vision statement, values and our school prayer – around our school environment.

Our awareness and understanding of spiritual development enriches what we offer to pupils and to everyone in the Open Academy community.

REFERENCED READING

Church of England Education Office (CEEO), Spiritual Development – Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom (2019).

This policy has been adapted from the Bath and Wells Diocese Spirituality in School Model Policy.