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**Evaluating student spiritual health  
within a grammar school for boys:  
Implications for school self-evaluation  
and leadership development**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the Doctor of Education in Education.

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to what lies beneath the surface. In this pursuit there was a belief that the voice of the pupils provides a rich source of insight with the conviction that education benefits from an engagement with academic study for all its participants. The good governance of the Haberdashers' Company has played an important part in securing an excellent school. From among their number I am thankful that Dr C. Watt saw fit to encourage this pursuit as being of professional and practical use.

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Hamba kahle. Ubusiswe.

### **Declarations.**

I declare that this work has not been previously accepted for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted for any degree.

Signed ..... (Candidate)

Date .....

### **Statement 1**

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged giving firm references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed .....(Candidate)

Date .....

### **Statement 2**

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and inter-library loan, and for the title to be made available to outside organisations.

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Date.....

## Thesis Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the concept of ‘spiritual health’, with a view to evaluating its efficacy and developmental potential in relation to general educational concerns and particularly those of school leadership. The focus of this research is to hear the voice of those being educated within a boys’ rural grammar school. The concept of spiritual health is explored primarily through the work of Professor L.J. Francis. The exploration involves considering the relevant academic literature in constructing the theory and in operationalising the theory in the spiritual health questionnaire. This questionnaire operationalises four distinct domains of spiritual health (personal, communal, environmental and transcendental).

The dissertation viewed from a professional standpoint how the concept of spiritual health may be used to discern a quantitative understanding of the wellbeing of pupils within a school. This approach was tested by exploring the responses of 356 students to the spiritual health questionnaire. Then these quantitative data were brought into dialogue with four sources of qualitative data reflecting the evaluative processes within the school.

The four sources of qualitative data included both internal and external approaches of evaluation. These were the school’s own internal evaluation document, an OfSTED report, the Good School’s Guide, and minutes from a discussion of these issues within the Student Council. These four sources of qualitative evaluation were reviewed systematically working with the spiritual health questionnaire. Each of the four

domains were considered independently (personal, communal, environmental and transcendental).

This process allowed for an evaluative discussion engaging quantitative material as a basis for a broader mixed-methods approach. Such an undertaking enables pupils to consider their own wellbeing, allows stakeholders, such as OfSTED or the parent body, to form a judgement on such matters. It also offers direction to school leaders as to the efficacy of their systems and future developments. The outcome of this study advocates the further use of the spiritual health questionnaire as a means of gathering data from small and particular cohorts, as well as larger bodies. This makes for a precise tool in education.

## Abbreviations

### Abbreviation

Cymca	Centymca Attitude Inventory
DfE	Department for Education
NCSC	The National Cyber Security Centre
OfSTED	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
RS	Religious Studies
SDP	School Development Plan
SEF	School Self-Evaluation Form
SH4DI	The Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index
SHALOM	The Spiritual Health and Life- Orientation Measure
SHQ	The Spiritual Health Questionnaire
SMSC	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
SWBQ	The Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire
TRVS	The Teenage Religion and Values Survey

## **Chapter One: Introducing the dissertation - seeking to ascertain the importance of student spiritual health for school self-evaluation and leadership development**

### **The Setting**

The aim of this research is to examine the concept of 'spiritual health', with a view to evaluating its efficacy in relation to general educational concerns and particularly those of school leadership. The focus is to be able to explore the voice of those being educated within an English school system, and to do so in the context of one particular school. This is an exploration of a small, but significant, cohort. The idea is to consider how the concept may be used to discern a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the wellbeing of pupils within a school. The exploration involves considering the relevant academic literature. This forms the basis to use the spiritual health questionnaire in a rural and selective setting and a consideration of what this means in the professional setting.

In this respect, the various Education acts such as the Education Reform Act 1988 (DfE, 1988), as well as the requirements of OfSTED, established by an act of parliament in 1992 are considered to be an important basis for the work. Those leading within schools, across the globe, as well as in the UK, have been faced with the challenge of educating beyond the curriculum in order to prepare the whole person for a valuable role within their community, and within their own humanity.

## **The Approach adopted**

The approach adopted in this dissertation will be to unravel the concept of spiritual health, firstly in an academic setting, and then to evaluate this as an operational tool within the particular educational setting introduced above. In this pursuit three areas are foundational. These areas are the usefulness of the approach for school leaders, relating to how the information might be used, and how this relates to the needs of a post-modern generation. The questions and this approach relate to both the ethos of the school and to its on-going self-evaluation at a point in time. The consideration of application will look at how the spiritual health questionnaire may inform school leadership. In this pursuit, the spiritual wellbeing of the pupils is to the fore.

This first chapter will consider the debate surrounding the perceptions of spirituality and of spiritual health. This will involve taking a view beyond merely that of education. There will also be an overview of the government's advice on matters relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education during the period of research. This will be placed in the context of School X and within the requirements placed on those leading the school. This will enable a review of the literature relevant to establishing spiritual health as a matter of educational concern. As such the intention is to pay attention to statutory requirements for the field of spiritual development, and assessment of the problematic nature of the construct 'spirituality' within an educational context. In this setting the concept of spiritual health is introduced to enable an objective assessment of the spiritual wellbeing of students and to consider how this may become an important part of school self-evaluation and leadership development.

Further to this, chapters two and three will outline the understanding of spiritual health in the operationalised work of Fisher (1998) and Francis (2010). The intention at this point is twofold: firstly, to provide a clear understanding of the four domains of spiritual health – personal, communal, environmental and transcendental; and secondly to lay the basis for the use of the spiritual health questionnaire in the school.

The intention here is to view their material in a developmental manner that allows for a quantitative basis to define and consider spiritual health. The focus here is to view the concept through the lens of school leadership. In chapter four the concept of ethos in education is considered an important marker in this pursuit, and chapter four will define how ethos is seen by OfSTED as well as linking this to the four domains of spiritual health in the work of Francis and Robbins (2005).

This investigation is developed in chapters five and six, considering the research methodology and the context of the sample. This involves explaining the external and internal assessment of this area within School X. Key to this area of investigation is a dialogical method with four different partners. The external voices are that of OfSTED and ‘The Good School’s Guide’. The internal contribution is provided by the school’s own evaluative procedure and documents, and by the pupil voice. The judgements of these four are compared to the data generated by the spiritual health questionnaire. In chapters 7 to 10, a chapter is dedicated to each of the domains in this comparison. Each chapter reviews the aim and method of the investigation. This is important since the quantitative basis is used to interact with qualitative material in a mixed-methods approach.

The final chapter is an attempt at reaching a judgement in the three areas to consider the three questions mentioned above. These dealt with the areas of the usefulness of spiritual health as a concept for school leaders, and of how best this information helps the provision of a spiritually healthy school. This relates to the deeper question of how well the concept of spiritual health and the spiritual health questionnaire function in a post-modern era.

### **Problems relating to defining ‘Spirituality’**

The concept of ‘spirituality’ is notoriously difficult to define and definitions abound both in academia and in education literature guiding schools. In the context of education, and the National College of School Leadership, West-Burnham (2002) offered the following as a working definition:

Spirituality is the journey to find a sustainable, authentic and profound understanding of the existential self which informs personal and social action. (West-Burnham, 2002, p. 3)

Throughout the period within which schools have been tasked with considering spirituality, the concept of spirituality has been criticised, on the basis of being irrelevant to contemporary culture (Bruce, 2002) and as being self-centred and self-indulgent (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). This does not change the requirements on school leaders in this area, but it does inform the problem of this concept, and of the application of leadership in this area.

Within the array of definitions of the term, Wright (2000a) usefully points out how spirituality is best viewed as a 'landscape' rather than a fixed point. This is a helpful illustration, but the landscape requires definition if there is to be a determination regarding its health and usefulness. It is at this point that the concept of 'spiritual health' rather than 'spirituality' is of use. It is for each school to navigate the landscape for the benefit of the community.

### **The problematic and an introduction to literature relating to spiritual health**

This dissertation engages with the idea of spiritual wellbeing through the concept of Spiritual health. This concept was first developed in the southern hemisphere. The purpose at this point is to provide a foundational understanding of the concept prior to a more detailed discussion in chapters two and three. It is argued through this review that both the concept and questionnaire relating to Spiritual health is a precise and helpful means of dealing with the rather vague notions of spirituality, and 'Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development' (SMSC).

In this section, there is an introductory focus on the breath and delivery of the concept of spiritual wellbeing. This is accessed and assessed by 'atheoretical model of spiritual health' (Fisher, 2009a; 2009b). This exploration takes place through the work relating to the 'Spiritual Health Questionnaire' (SHQ), as designed by Fisher (Fisher, 1998; 2009a; 2009c; 2011a; 2011b;) and developed by Francis (Francis & Robbins 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker; 2012). The intention here is to show how the literature in this area points towards the benefit of research that is both qualitative and quantitative,

while working from the basis of the quantitative. The quantitative forms a foundation and ‘rudder’ for later engagement with qualitative material. All of this review is considered with a view to what the implications might be for school leadership – and in this setting the work of West-Burnham (2002; West-Burnham & Jones, 2008) is a focal point.

### **The problematic need for a definition of Spirituality**

An initial question concerns the definition and efficacy of the term ‘spirituality’. The challenge of this dissertation concerns whether or not the concept of ‘spiritual health’ provides a viable means of exploring this area. The focus here is on the work of initially Fisher (1998; 2009a; 2009b; 2009c; 2010a; 2010b; 2011a; 2011b) and of Francis (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012). Hence definition becomes important.

### **The nature of the task**

The task is complex. Hunt (2005) explains this as a problematic approach that tries to hold differing definitions, resulting in an inefficiency within the concept of spirituality. Hunt explains the sociological discussion, which shows how complexity arises because the concept involves a debate that crosses various disciplines. The interdisciplinary nature of this pursuit is clear when the concept is extended to the health (McSherry, 2000) or broader medical disciplines (Dyson, Cobb, & Forman, 1997; Fisher, 2001; 2004; Narayanamy, 2001), or as a key aspect of the entrepreneurial (Fernando, 2007). Equally there is a strong case for relating the debate to education and to pedagogy

(Grimmitt, 2000; Wright, 2000a; Francis & Robbins, 2005; Robbins & Francis, 2010).

The fusion of ideas often occurs most usefully when the researcher considers the concept of measurement – and the nature of personality and types becomes important (Francis & Robbins, 2005).

### **Areas of general agreement – and its recognition in Education**

There is a general agreement that the spiritual is a significant concept within our society (Fullan, 2003; Senge, 1990, 2012; Senge, et al, 2005). It is one that cannot be ignored (Berger, 1999, 2009) and is more like a landscape than a fixed point (Wright, 2000a). As such it makes the need for a basis for discussion, for a quantitative understanding important. Certainly, in the field of education there has been debate about and an attempt to define spirituality. There is, in this context, a working methodology, the present author suggests that is used within the approach adopted by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) by West-Burnham (2002):

Spirituality is the journey to find a sustainable, authentic and profound understanding of the existential self which informs personal and social action.  
(West-Burnham, 2002, p. 1)

This allows our investigation of spiritual health in School X to engage in both a quest and a challenge. Both require a quantitative basis. This also allows for an engagement between those who see a religious orientation as important, and those who do not.

### **The concept of 'Spiritual health' within this setting**

The contention of this research that this engagement is best explored within the developing models of 'spiritual health' (Fisher, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2014, 2016; Francis, 2010; Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny & Baker, 2012). These enable schools to have an approach that is quantitative but gives space for a qualitative involvement (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Robins & Francis, 2010; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). The benefit of this approach is that it defines the areas of importance and offers a useful measure within which to access and guide educational provision. The fact that these models are continually developing indicates a flexibility that offers two benefits. The first is that there is an ability to adapt in order to engage with a changing society, so in a few cases questions within the SHQ change. Equally there is the ballast of a sound investigative basis that the process allows. This will become apparent further within the study.

This present research begins with the pupils, seeing how best their views allow for the curriculum, ethos and pastoral support to be developed. It will be argued that the reason for this change of focus will be the greater efficacy of the model of spiritual health as designed and operationalised by Fisher and Francis.

### **Spirituality for Schools: justification and measurement**

Considering a justification, as already noted, Bruce (2002) and Heelas and Woodhead (2005) show that schools engage with the concept of spirituality and of spiritual

wellbeing in a critical environment. There are a number of more positive views, (Ellison, 1983; Coles, 1990; Fisher, 1991, 1998, 1999, 2007, 2011a; Bigger & Brown, 1999, 2013; Erricker & Erricker, 2000; Grimmitt, 2000; Wright, 2000a, 2000b; Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003; Fullan, 2003; Benefiel, 2005; Francis & Robbins, 2005; Carr, 2006; Warren-Smith, 2006a, 2006b ; Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Hong, 2008; de Souza, 2009a, 2009b, 2014, 2016; Vialle, Walton, & Woodcock, 2008; West-Burnham & Jones, 2008; Francis, 2010; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012; Hyde, Ota, & Yust, 2012; Robbins & Francis, 2016; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017; Plater, 2017; Brooks, Michaelson, King, Inchley, & Pickett, 2018). This debate does not change the requirements on school leaders in this area, but it does inform the problem of this concept, and of the application of leadership in this area. Within this there are the defining requirements of the DfE (2010) and it is this that has primary importance.

The discussion concerning measurement highlights the need for a workable definition and a measurable identity. A number of commentators argue that this is both possible and desirable, including Francis and Robbins (2005), Simon (2008), Leaver (2009), Francis (2010), Moberg (2010), Moodley, Esterhuyse, and Beukes (2010), De Jager Meezenbroek, Garssen, Van den Berg, Van Dierendonck, Visser, and Schaufeli (2012), and Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012). The use of questionnaires to provide quantitative material allows for a discernible form of spirituality, which both relates back to the past, but allows for a different perception of the future, for personal growth and of the nature of change. In this exploration spirituality is seen an essential to humanity and a reasonable area to explore. The challenge for schools is what effect this will have on the individual in question and on the group dynamic of individuals within an

organisation such as a school – and then to decide how best to structure the systemic and individual response to this. Integral to this task must be the process of gathering information and of measuring effect.

### **Spirituality as defined in British education**

The context within Education in England means that activity in schools is guided and judged by the DfE (Department for Education). An example of this is the Education Reform Act 1988 (DfE, 1988). Whatever the validity professionals within Education give to the above arguments (Grimmitt, 2000), the debate within Education offers a useful model of the role of spirituality within a learning organisation. In the case of schools, it is not purely an idea that relates to the pupils. Fisher (1998) argues that one should also consider the teachers and parents as well. However, for the sake of this paper, it is the pupil body, and particularly, their voice, that is the focus.

For those working within Education, the 1988 Education Reform Act and the subsequent Circulars 3/89 (DfE, 1989) and 1/94 (DfE, 1994), (established within Section 7 of the 1944 Education Act), defined Spirituality in terms of that which:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of the society; and
- Prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. (DfE, 1988, p. 1)

This sets rather vague goals, and it is questionable if it actually defines what spirituality might be. It does however highlight a school's general duties within this area.

## Outlining the educational requirements

The foremost problem for those dealing with these areas, concerned how to establish a benchmark, that is, how to define what such concepts involved. If something is to be accessed, then it must be clear what it is and how to perform the measurement, prior to any judgements being made. This task is evidenced with the OfSTED (2012a, 2012b) requirements and with the DfE (2012) enquiry concerning ‘Improving the Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural development of pupils.’ In such documents words such as ‘enable’, ‘encourage’, ‘provide’ and ‘assist’ outline what a school should seek to achieve, but without giving a clear methodology as to how this might be the case. The direction given to OfSTED inspectors (OfSTED, 2016) suggests the problem faced when approaching spirituality in schools. In this setting an understanding of what spiritual development involves becomes important. All schools must be judged on:

Pupils’ spiritual development ... shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in 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. (OfSTED, 2016, p.40)

Schools are judged on a scale from, at best, as being ‘Outstanding’, to the most concerning judgement of a school being ‘Inadequate’. Those deemed to be ‘outstanding’ will have systems in place, and pupils who exhibit ‘thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development’. Hence the importance of spiritual development. At the other end of the spectrum, the

inspectors will see ‘serious weakness’ in the failure to enable an overall promotion of these values.

The intent is the same in the guidance (01/2012), although the number of areas inspected by OfSTED (2012a) has been to cut, so that the observation allows for a focus on examining whether or not a school has a coherent approach to SMSC. The coherence of what is involved is therefore important in the OfSTED categories of inspection, including curriculum, capacity to improve, overall effectiveness, the impact and range of opportunities, as well the more predictable development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of a pupil and the community. What takes place in class is of importance, but this must also be reflected in the general ethos of the community. In order to aid this, the following advice has been given to maintained school and academies with a view to forming a judgement on the consistency of provision and the equality of opportunity. OfSTED (2012b) expresses this in Appendix No. 1. These aspects of the curriculum and ethos will be accessed within a judgement of the overall effectiveness of a school. This judgement is made on the basis of the following evidence within this guidance and is the duty of the School’s leadership and of the governors (OfSTED, 2012a, 2012b).

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education – and the need for judgement**

This is an investigation further explored in the setting, already alluded to, of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. In the OfSTED evaluation material (2012b) there are no less than seven references to schools being judged in the areas of ‘spiritual,

moral, social and cultural education’ (5:1, 12:3, 13:3, 14:6, 18:11, 26:15 & 33:20, pp. 1 – 14). The judgment made in relation to these four areas involves the overall quality of a school and considers this in: the contexts of the education provision as in the effectiveness and quality of education; the achievement of the pupils; the quality of the teaching; aspects of behaviour and safeguarding; and the quality of the leadership and management within the school at all levels. In this context inspectors expect to see that the schools provide a ‘thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development’, and that this should take place within ‘a supportive, highly cohesive learning community’.

The challenge for schools looks at how an interest in Education is expected to provide a process that allows for spiritual development and health, for:

experiences to learn and grow, develop and improve, mend and reform ...  
seeking spiritual growth outside the bounds of the local, traditional place of  
worship. (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 163)

This captures the change of focus and the need for openness to new forms of this landscape. In this the culture of the school, and the requirements of OfSTED are viewed more as a lens than a label (Chase, 2007).

### **Relating spiritual health to the DfE requirements**

This guidance requires a baseline for judgements to be made, that which provides an empirical basis from which to work. The exploration actioned by the ‘Spiritual Health Questionnaire’ allows a useful insight into the views of the community of a school –

both the collective and the individual. The Questionnaire allows for information to be gathered across the range of issues relating to SMSC development. As such it is not just a pupil's views on social issues and religiosity that are collected, but there is a connection to the personality type as well as to the nature of the institution.

In this context it is useful to outline Fisher's concept of spiritual health. Fisher (1999) defines spiritual health as follows:

**Spiritual health can be seen as:**

- **A fundamental dimension of people's overall health and well-being, permeating and integrating all other dimensions of health** (i.e. the physical, mental, emotional, social and vocational; as it is
- **A dynamic state of being, shown by the extent to which people live in harmony with:**
  - **themselves** (i.e. stated meaning, purpose and values in life);
  - **others** (as expressed in the quality and depth of relationships, relating to morality, culture and religion);
  - **some-thing/ some-One beyond the human level** (i.e. ultimate concern; cosmic force; transcendent reality; or God – through faith),
  - **and the environment** (past care and nurture for the physical and biological, to a sense of awe and wonder; for some, the notion of unity with the environment). All italics and bold text as per Fisher (1999, p. 25)

Fisher is clear that such a concept works well in the educational setting. This application of the idea to education will be discussed in Chapter Two. It will be further developed in Chapter Three looking at the work in the UK by Francis (2010).

**Seeking an objective assessment of the spiritual health of students so that the data becomes an important part of school X's self-evaluation and leadership development**

The approach offered by the 'Spiritual Health Questionnaire' (SHQ) allows a useful insight into the views of the community of a school – both the collective and the individual. The 'Questionnaire' allows for information to be gathered across the range of issues relating to SMSC development.

**The research: Context and method**

This project was conducted working within a school in a rural community. The community is a market town with a population estimated to be near 16,000. The main 'industry' within the town is Education. The town and community maintain their rurality despite being within ten miles of an urban, new town with a growing population in excess of 170,000. There are also several other urban conurbations within a twenty-five-mile radius, and pupils come into the schools from these.

The school that is the focus of this research, School X, is a Grammar school with some 850 pupils. It is selective and oversubscribed. It draws pupils from a wide range of geographical locations, but not such a wide social demographic. The make-up of the student body is a combination of boys through Years 7 – 13, with girls joining for the Sixth form. Of the pupils within the school around a tenth are boarders – coming from the locality but also further afield, such as Hong Kong. The information in the table

below allows for a foundational understanding for the research that follows, providing the information considered by OfSTED to be necessary prior to inspection.

Table 1: 1 - to show the basic information about school X from the OfSTED report of 2013 (OfSTED School X, 2013, p. 3).

- School X converted to an academy in January 2011. When the predecessor school was last inspected by OfSTED it was judged to be outstanding.
- This oversubscribed school is smaller than the average secondary school with a sixth form and has boarding provision for 90 boys. The large sixth form accepts boys and girls from the wider area.
- The school is a Company school, and the company appoints the governing body. It is federated with another school in the area.
- The student population is stable with very few students joining or leaving the school partway through the year.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is much lower than the national average.
- Very few students are eligible for support through the pupil premium, the additional funding provided by the government for students who are looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or children of service families.
- A much smaller than average proportion of students are disabled or have special educational needs, supported through school action, school action plus or a have statement of special educational needs.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is on two sites about a mile apart. One site is used predominately for boarding and for games.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

Allowing for the facts in the Table 1: 1, the main focus of the school is academic success but other aspects of school life flourish. The results achieved by the school and

the pupils place it within the most successful schools in the country. Significantly, while academic success is important, the school has a strong House system that caters for the whole person within a holistic manner. There is also an extensive extracurricular programme.

The methodology of the research will involve the present researcher working with the results gathered from the use of the 'Spiritual health' questionnaire in the school between 2012 and 2014.

**Application: The implications for school leadership**

The data will allow a judgement concerning how the DfE (2010, 2011) requirements are being fulfilled in keeping with completing the challenges set by OfSTED (2016). This is an important judgement for the leadership of the school. Equally it is important in order to gain an insight into the spiritual wellbeing of the pupils.

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## **Chapter 2 Introducing spiritual health**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the contribution made by Fisher's model of spiritual health that is adapted for the empirical research presented later in this dissertation. This involves five steps: discussing the background on which Fisher built as he distinguished between discussions of spiritual wellbeing and spiritual health; examining Fisher's wider discussion of spirituality; testing Fisher's model of four domains and discussing Fisher's measurement of spiritual health; and exploring how Fisher's model has been applied in educational contexts. The next chapter builds on this analysis by giving attention to Francis' adaptation of Fisher's model.

### **From spiritual wellbeing to spiritual health: An empirical journey**

The concept of spiritual wellbeing existed before Fisher's investigations. Fisher chooses to articulate and to develop his view of spiritual health within the previous discussions. The discussion is rooted in the early 1970s, when the concept of spiritual wellbeing was being researched across continents and within a multi-disciplinary setting (Moberg and Brusek, 1978; Moberg, 2012; Ellison, 1983; Fisher, 1998). Fisher (2014) asserts that the term spiritual wellbeing appears to be first mentioned in 1971 in the United States, with a working definition that involved "the affirmation of life in relationship to God, self, community and environment that nurtures and creates wholeness" (p. 23). Although the language of spiritual wellbeing might be a relatively recent construct, Fisher argues that there is evidence in both Hippocrates and ancient Chinese medical

texts that much earlier links were being made between the concept of the 'spirit' and 'health'. Quite how one decides on a process of dating the concept is open to discussion, but one sees a growing awareness of the importance of spiritual wellbeing in the 1970s. An example of this is in the work of Moberg and Brusek (1978) arguing that spiritual wellbeing was a neglected area of research in the social sciences concerned with the quality of life. It was their perception that there had been empirical investigation of personal and social wellbeing, but that religiosity, or spirituality, had been overlooked. The reasons for this omission were considered to relate to a paucity of consideration of theoretical concepts of measurement, a failure to deal with the biases of researchers and a lack of an agreed philosophical definition of the concept. Hence, there was a need for a methodology that was 'conceptual, theoretical, quantitative, and empirical' (p. 303). Moberg (2010, 2012) was to continue to work on this endeavour for the next thirty years. These early discussions from 1978 indicate the basis for the debate that follows.

Central to the debate was the need for the concept of spiritual wellbeing to have an empirical basis. This empiricism was to enable an empirical and scientific methodology to clarify the connection between the issue of spiritual wellbeing in comparison with the other aspects of wellbeing within an individual's life. Such a sound basis enables an evaluative investigation of the influence of the concept of spiritual wellbeing. There was also a sense that useful as the qualitative approaches might be, they could only provide a hypothesis. It was the data generated by a quantitative method that allowed for an informed view. There was general agreement among those engaged in this debate that systematic and multi-disciplinary approach

was needed in order to address this issue. It was important, therefore, to add the quantitative investigation to the qualitative approach (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003).

The work of Ellison (Bufford & Ellison, 1982; Ellison, 1983; Bufford, Ellison, & Poloutzian, 1991) shows a foundational example of an empirical and scientific method to spiritual wellbeing. Ellison sought to combine the concepts of the 'spiritual' and of 'health'. This fusion was before this became a recognised approach. Ellison's research shows across a decade that similar ideas were being formulated in the United States, as those that were to develop in the Australian and European settings. Ellison's investigation was multidimensional. He utilised a format involving skills from the fields of behavioural and clinical psychology as well as theology. The combination further involved psychotheological integration. The method was to design the application of an empirical scale allowing for operation within a range of diverse groups. While this clearly overlaps with the later work of Fisher and Francis, it did not share their focus with education of school age children, being more concerned with young people at university. Ellison explained that the spiritual wellbeing scale was developed and constructed in order to give an empirical voice to the interest in quality of life and general wellbeing. The scale sought:

to measure the spiritual dimension ... the scale ... indicates well-being in a variety of spheres, including physical and mental health, psychological adjustment, and assertiveness. (Bufford, Poloutzian, & Ellison, 1991, p. 56)

The scale aimed to act as a general indicator of a person's self-perception of their wellbeing, which in turn, may be used for the assessment of both individual and, in some cases group, spiritual wellbeing. As such, this scale was developed in order to

provide a measure of how spiritual quality of life is perceived. There are two subscales that scored for religious wellbeing and for existential wellbeing. This involved exploration of different areas, such as an individual's relationship with God that is explored within the religious wellbeing scale. Within this the existential wellbeing scale offered an assessment of issues relating to a sense of purpose. The full scale comprised of twenty items.

The first ten items sought to assess religious wellbeing while the following ten were applied to the notion of existential wellbeing. The operation of this approach has shown the two subscales of religious and existential well-being achieved good test-retest and internal consistent reliability coefficients. Ellison's model provides a benchmark for what was to follow.

### **Fisher's broader view of spirituality**

Before reaching a working definition of spiritual health, Fisher offers a general definition of spirituality (2011, pp. 11-18) which is grounded in a view that "a person's spirituality should help them find meaning in the mundane, as well as in the mystery of life" (2011, p. 11). To further this idea Fisher endorses Howard and Howard's contention that:

Spirituality occurs not separate from everyday life but is best exercised in the midst of our daily activities (Howard & Howard, 1996, p. 183).

In keeping with the above ideas, Fisher (2011) sees spirituality as something to be considered because of its impact on 'the quality of people's lives' (p. 11); as an entity

comprising of ‘multi-faceted components’ (p. 12). He identifies six components that inform the process of definition and of measurement and are important in the conceptualisation of spirituality (1998, pp. 10-16). Fisher (1999) defines spiritual health, as already indicated in the first chapter of this dissertation, as:

**Spiritual health can be seen as:**

- **A fundamental dimension of people’s overall health and well-being, permeating and integrating all other dimensions of health** (i.e. the physical, mental, emotional, social and vocational);
- **A dynamic state of being, shown by the extent to which people live in harmony with:**
  - **themselves** (i.e. stated meaning, purpose and values in life);
  - **others** (as expressed in the quality and depth of relationships, relating to morality, culture and religion);
  - **some-thing/ some-One beyond the human level** (i.e. ultimate concern; cosmic force; transcendent reality; or God – through faith);
  - **and the environment** (past care and nurture for the physical and biological, to a sense of awe and wonder; for some, the notion of unity with the environment). All italics and bold text as per Fisher. (Fisher, 1999, p. 25)

This definition provides a foundation for exploring Fisher’s components that are mentioned above.

**Fisher’s components that inform definition and measurement**

The first component is the innate nature of spirituality, being at the heart of human experience. Fisher offers a view, based on the research of the late 1990s, that both spirituality and religion form a central part of the human existence and condition. As

such it is useful to see spirituality as an important aspect exploring how human beings function.

The second component is the emotive nature of spirituality, as that which touches people's hearts. In this there is the recognition that, because of the centrality of the concept, this term cannot be neutral or value-free. Alongside this observation there is recognition of the need for objectivity when dealing with spirituality or spiritual health.

The third component relates to a lengthier discussion of the idea that religion and spirituality are not synonymous, although he is aware that some equate concepts of 'spirit' with religious activity, rather than seeing such things as a part of being. Fisher (1998) is clear, however, that 'spirituality is not religion' (p. 13). Fisher expresses this as:

the focus of religion is on ideology and rules (of faith and belief systems), but spirituality focuses on experience and relationships (with self, others, including the Transcendent – God, and the environment). (Fisher, 1998, p. 13)

This is foundational, as can be evidenced in his later development of the concept of spiritual health (p. 27).

The fourth component determines spirituality to be subjective. In this area the need for the scientific method providing quantitative data becomes apparent. 'The subjective' involves that aspect of spirituality expressed in personal perception. As such it lacks much of the objective nature considered necessary for investigation using the scientific

method. The basis of the argument here is that, it is an inadequate exploration to focus purely on human experience from within a sensory approach, and that in order to consider the spiritual it is important to allow for the development of empiricism that investigates the essence of both humanity and spirituality.

The fifth component relates to an understanding of Western Culture, and this builds on the previous point. Here Fisher notes the materialistic nature of Western life,

with the tangible aspects of life, such as industrial production, wealth and power, apparently relegating spiritual issues to a place of minor importance.  
(Fisher, 1998, p. 14)

Fisher draws on theological and sociological observation, suggesting that while this view must be recognised, it is not one to determine his investigations.

The sixth component concerns the matter of how one views the 'spirit'. Fisher follows Priestly (1985) in seeing spirit as being a dynamic concept with a dual aspect. This duality concerns the idea that spirit needs to be experienced prior to interpretation and conceptualisation. While this fails to provide a platform for analysis it does offer an initial model. The purpose of the prototypical is to enable communication and debate that is rigorous. The ideal is to operationalise this pursuit without reducing spirituality to the purely mechanistic or behavioural.

Fisher offers 'a composite definition of spirituality'. It is his aim that this composite definition of spirituality would allow the components to be weighted differently. This

weighting would help in defining spirituality appropriately. The appropriateness of this considers the manner that best suited an individual's worldview. Fisher's lengthy definition shows the complexity of this pursuit. He suggests that:

Spirituality is concerned with a person's awareness of the existence and experience of a person's inner feelings and beliefs that give purpose, meaning and value to life.

Spirituality helps individuals to live at peace with themselves, to love (God and) their neighbour, and to live in harmony with the environment.

For some, spirituality involves an encounter with God, or transcendent reality,

which can occur in or out of the context of organised religion, whereas for others, it needs to involve no experience or belief in the supernatural.

(Fisher, 1998, p. 16)

Fisher is clear, that when using this definition, it is important to clarify both an individual's perception of spirituality and to provide a basis from which to investigate the concept. For the sake of this research, the above will be taken as the operational norm.

### **Fisher's model of spiritual health**

Fisher wished to build on Ellison's spiritual wellbeing scale (1983) in order to develop a working model able to encompass both religious and non-religious expressions.

Fisher's approach (1999, 2001, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b) identifies the four domains concerned with the personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental. Spiritual health is established, therefore, by exploring the separate yet complementary or interconnected areas of the Personal (relation with self); Communal (relation with

others); Environmental (relation with the environment); and Spiritual or Transcendental (relation with the transcendental 'Other'). Each of these domains is a part that relates to the whole that can be called 'spiritual health'. He explains this in the following way:

Spiritual health is a dynamic state of being, reflected in the quality of relationships that people have in up to four domains of spiritual well-being:

Personal domain where a person intra-relates with self;

Communal domain, with in-depth inter-personal relationships;

Environmental domain, connecting with nature;

Transcendental domain, relating to some-thing or some-One beyond the human level.

The Four Domains Model of Spiritual Health and Well-Being embraces all extant world-views from the ardently religious to the atheistic rationalist.

(Fisher, 2001, p. 17)

Fisher understands the four domains as being central to gaining a proper view of spiritual health. This is a concept that:

is a dynamic state of being, shown by the extent to which people live in harmony within relationships in the ... domains. (Fisher, 2011b, p. 17)

Fisher (1998) fashioned the four domains from a body of research that involved some ninety academic pieces of work (p. 24). This was the process that allowed him to develop his definition and his model, as he considered how spiritual wellbeing related with self, others, environment and the transcendent other, which he continues to use within his work.

### **Fisher's four domains**

Fisher describes the four domains in the following ways. In the Personal Domain, Fisher speaks of the way in which: one intra-relates with oneself with regards to meaning, purpose and values in life.

Self-awareness is the driving force or transcendent aspect of the human spirit in its search for identity and self-worth. (Fisher, 2011b, p. 21)

As such, Fisher sees this domain expressed in dealing with a sense of identity, self-awareness, joy in life, inner peace and concepts of meaning in life. The route into gaining an understanding in this area comes in the use of indicators that deal with issues such as self-worth and the nature of the life to be lived.

In the Communal Domain, Fisher explores what he describes as the aspect of a person's being that is related to:

the quality and depth of interpersonal relationships, between self and others, relating to morality, culture and religion. These are expressed in love, forgiveness, trust, hope and faith in humanity. (Fisher, 2011b, p. 22)

This domain investigates areas that involve both the inner human emotions as well as their outward expression. Examples of this would involve a love for others within the community, the ability to love and to forgive, and the attributes of expressing trust and enabling kindness.

In the Environmental Domain, Fisher (2011) explores that which goes:

beyond care and nurture for the physical and biological, to a sense of awe and wonder; for some, the notion of unity with the environment. (Fisher, 2011b, p. 22.)

The environmental domain deals with an individual's connection with nature involving concepts such as the experience of awe. This is to be found in a sense of oneness with nature, a harmony between the individual and their environment, even to the point of this being expressed as a sense of 'magic' in a relational experience of the environment.

In the Transcendental Domain, Fisher considers the implications of spiritual health as: [the] relationship of self with some-thing or some-One beyond the human level (i.e., ultimate concern, cosmic force, transcendent reality or God). This involves:

faith towards, adoration and worship of, the source of Mystery of the universe.  
(Fisher, 2011b, p. 22)

In considering the transcendental domain Fisher has a focus on the divine, which may be referred to as God. Fisher (2014) exhibits a strong preference towards the concept of God and use of the term. This domain involves concepts such as worship, peace or oneness with the idea of a creator, the divine or God. Hence, there is the use of the term 'someone or something' in his work when referring to a transcendental awareness of 'the Other'. This is fashioning a way to investigate that which is beyond either the human world, or the human ability to conceptualise in language.

Fisher (1998) argues that these four domains give a reasonable view of an individual's spiritual wellbeing and provide a useful conceptual and operational framework. Fisher (2011b) summarises his approach as one that gives a clear concept and framework. The

four domains allow for a diversity of views of spirituality and of what health might be conceived of in this discussion.

### **Fisher's measurement of spiritual health**

In Fisher (2009b, 2009c) published a substantial work that sought to deal with the assessment and nurturing of spiritual wellbeing, with a focus on education. Within this work Fisher explains the development of his SH4DI questionnaire. This was concerned with assessing spiritual health by operationalising the four domains of spiritual wellbeing (Fisher, 2001, p. 230), in the SHALOM format. This Fisher sought to be 'a spiritual health and life orientation measure for secondary school students (Fisher, 2009a, p. 60). The purpose was to design 'an instrument to reflect young people's spiritual health'. This does not mean that 'SHALOM' was limited simply to young people. SHALOM is flexible within a variety of contexts, allowing for clear measurement of spiritual health, whether that involved students in a school, those who teach them, or patients and medical staff in a hospital. Fisher is aware that the assessment of spiritual health needs to impact practice. Fisher writes that:

assessing a person's spiritual health is one matter; using the information to help improve quality of life is another ... in schools ... most staff do not have the time for in-depth communication with individuals to ascertain their deepest needs which impact on their spiritual well-being. So how can people be encouraged to share of themselves in a way in which concerned carers can obtain and use the information to help enhance quality of life in the spiritual dimension? (Fisher, 2009a, p. 65)

This is a significant issue for those involved in education. If one casts the leadership and pastoral staff within a school as 'carers', then this would be a problem all would

recognise. SHALOM can be used in order to solve this dilemma. This approach has the advantage that:

SHALOM as an instrument for measuring spiritual health (being) that it compares each person's stated ideal with how s/he feels (lived experience) in each of the four domains of spiritual well-being. (Fisher, 2009a, p. 65)

Fisher argues that this approach is both sensitive and accurate (Fisher, 2009c). This is achievable because it is able to deal with the variations encountered due to issues of gender or school type. This is appealing to those leading schools because information is gathered effectively, and the data presented in a useful manner.

Placed alongside other measures of spirituality, Fisher's model and instruments have received positive evaluation. De Jager Meezenbroek, Garssen, Van den Berg, Van Dierendonck, Visser, and Schaufeli (2012) review ten differing questionnaires that seek to gather information on the importance of spirituality. The review considers the use of questionnaires not only concerned with religiosity but also concerned "to address spirituality as a universal human experience" (2012, p.1). The outcome of this review is the following recommendation:

Only the multidimensional Spiritual Well-being Questionnaire (SWBQ) from Gomez and Fisher (2003) is promising. Its validity and reliability have been proven in student samples, most items are appropriately formulated, and it does not include well-being items. In addition, the questionnaire consists of twenty short items and will therefore easily be administered ... (De Jager Meezenbroek et al, 2010, p. 15)

This statement endorses Fisher's advocacy of his quantitative approach.

### **Application of Fisher's model**

The remit of this dissertation requires an exploration of spiritual health in schools. In this pursuit it is important to consider Fisher's contribution to the area of education studies, and what it means to provide leadership in this area. Throughout his work, Fisher (1998, 2007, 2009b, 2010a, 2011, 2016) has maintained a significant concern for the wellbeing of young people in schools. Fisher (2009a) explained this interest in education as being a process of 'reaching the heart', which involved the need both to assess and to nurture spiritual wellbeing within educational contexts.

Fisher is not content just to gather data but seeks to understand how a quantitative investigation can inform pastoral care (2006), allow for a balanced passage through schooling (2009b) and fashion the curriculum (2010a). Fisher (2006) has been keen to gather, to understand and to use the views of adolescents in order to give a comprehensive view of the care that is needed in schools. This operationalisation, that hears the adolescent voice in school, is crucial to understanding his approach.

### **The use of Fisher's work in the School setting**

Fisher has utilised schools as a means of gathering data in order to gain an insight into how adolescents think and sought to form an understanding of their spiritual health on this basis (1998, 2006, 2007, 2011b). Fisher (2006) considered how best to understand what influenced this area, and how to apply this understanding to the provision of pastoral care. Here he worked with over a thousand pupils in a range of schools in

Victoria, Western Australia. In 2007 Fisher developed this theme, arguing for a reevaluation of spiritual wellbeing in these schools.

Fisher's work has also been adapted by others, for example, Crawford and Rossiter (2006), examining a range of young people's views in Australian schools. In order to demonstrate the scope and flexibility of Fisher's empirical approach to spiritual health, this dissertation will now consider four examples of his work used in different settings between 2012 and 2017. The work of Moodley et al (2010) in South Africa explored the wellbeing of South African adolescents. This was based on the work of Gomez and Fisher (2003, 2005). The aim was to see how adolescents in the changing context of South Africa compared with those elsewhere in terms of their spiritual health. South African youth culture has a high degree of religiosity, which contributes to the richness of cultural diversity embracing difference of ethnicity, language and religious affiliation. This investigation required a degree of flexibility in translating the questionnaire into different languages, and then dealing with the responses, as is seen below. In the review of the limitations of this process, and in the reflection given to recommendations, the following is argued:

Participants in this study came from different cultural, religious and language groupings (although the participation prerequisite was that they had to be conversant in English or Afrikaans, or both). Measures of religion and spirituality, should consider the issue of cultural sensitivity since differences in religious and spiritual beliefs and practices are interwoven into other cultural aspects. Given that the South African adolescent population comprises different racial, religious and cultural groupings, 11 official languages (with many more dialects) and has many adolescents residing in rural areas, it may be difficult to generalize this study's findings to encompass the broader South

African adolescent population. Furthermore, self-report measures are prone to measurement error due to factors such as the possibility that participants may not properly understand the instructions in the assessment instrument, retrospective recall bias and problems with accuracy of reporting. Also, the use of a cross-sectional, single method design in assessing the factor validity may also be a limitation. (Moodley, Esterhuysen, & Beukes, 2010, p. 147)

It is worth noting that this research did not look particularly at schooling, and this is one of the areas of investigation that would enhance the research. This investigation endorsed the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and subsequent investigations.

In 2016 two studies were published that can further support the choice to work from Fisher's ideology and methodology. Michaelson et al (2016) explored the developmental patterns of adolescent spiritual health across six countries, Canada, Czech Republic, England, Israel, Poland and Scotland. The questionnaire was used across the different environments within school systems. Those young people within these schools were between the ages of 11-15. The data confirm similar results to other studies although was not applied to the field of education specifically. Juskiene (2016), working in Lithuania from a Christian perspective, using Fisher, Francis and Johnson (2002) comes to similar conclusions. In these examples there is evidence relevant to this dissertation. This is that Fisher's model of spiritual health can be applied reliably across different environments.

There is a clearer awareness of the role of education and schooling in Dutkova, Holubcikova, Kravcova, Babinck, Tavel, and Geckova (2017), who are also influenced by Fisher and by Francis and Johnson (Fisher, Francis, and Johnson, 2002). This study

involves the issue of bullying (in Slovenia) among pupils with a mean age of 13.48 years. Of particular relevance is the 52% of the final sample that were adolescent males, which evidences a possible comparison with this present work. Once again, this evidences the application of Fisher's method adapted to explore a particular group and particular topic. The usefulness of such work for school leaders is touched upon in the conclusion to Dutkova's research when it is noted that this study:

shows an association between perceived importance of spiritual well-being and bullying behaviour, with a mediating role of perceived bullying behaviour of peers. Adolescents who reported a higher level of spirituality were at lower risk of bullying others. This indicates the need to promote strategies that support the development of spiritual well-being among adolescents, as it can play an important role in decreasing the prevalence of bullying. (Dutkova Holubcikova, Kravcova, Babinck, Tavel, & Geckova, 2017, p. 2220)

For school leaders the challenge 'to promote strategies' in this area is an important issue. The use of Fisher's empirical approach allows for a useful basis from which to engage in this task.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter set out to establish the contribution made by Fisher's model of spiritual health to understanding differing and complex educational environments. Fisher's empirical research can be seen to be flexible yet to offer quantitative precision. Fisher clarified the concept of spiritual health. In this clarification he sees it as distinct from the related construct of spiritual wellbeing as measured by Ellison. Within this, Fisher's notion of spiritual health related to his wider discussion of spirituality. It has clarified how the four domains work, as well as introducing

Fisher's measurement of spiritual health. It has evaluated how Fisher and others have used his measure in education-related research. The next two chapters explore how Francis built on Fisher's conceptualisation of spiritual health and developed his own distinctive conceptualisation and operationalisation of the construct. This provides a basis for praxis in many settings, not simply education.

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## Chapter 3: Considering Francis' approach to spiritual health

### Introduction

The present study has its roots in two related research traditions. The first research tradition considers Francis' earlier work in the area of empirical research, as reflected in *Youth in Transit* (1982), *The Values Debate* (2001a), and *Teenage Religion and Values* by Francis & Kay (1995). This work being prior to his involvement with Fisher. This considers work done in the eighties and nineties using a questionnaire to gather information from significant numbers of young people. It is also worth noting that Francis returns subsequently to this work and re-analysed the data in the light of the second research tradition.

The second research tradition considers how Francis develops Fisher's conceptualisation of spiritual health within the context of his concern with large-scale studies of teenage religion and values. The previous chapter introduced the broader context of Fisher's work. The present chapter introduces the broader context of Francis' work with this specific focus on its relevance to school leadership.

This chapter combines a survey of Francis' approach followed by discussion of particular examples. Within this approach there is debate as to why one should be concerned with spiritual health. Francis enters this debate with his approach to operationalising and interpreting spiritual health; and extending the analysis in relation

to its usage in schools, with an emphasis on the concept of ethos which is useful for school leadership.

The purpose of this chapter is not to offer a consideration of all that Francis has contributed to the debate about the use of empirical data to understand spiritual health, nor the intricacy of the questionnaires Francis designed in this pursuit. Rather, it is to enable a view of how aspects of the work Francis engaged in provides a useful basis for those within school leadership. This is the dynamic that allows school leaders to perceive and act upon the details relating to a particular cohort. The aim of such an undertaking is to provide a means of understanding and improving the spiritual health of a school's communities, with a primary focus on the community of the pupils.

Finally, in order to add clarity for the subsequent chapters, the final section of this chapter will summarise the areas that highlight the reasons for the use of Francis' approach in this present study. These areas will focus on Francis' work within the concept of spiritual health with a general view to the importance to education. There will be a particular focus in this exploration of Francis' work on the usefulness of spiritual health for those in school leadership. It is this aspect that will be foundational to the following discussions.

### **Francis' 'foundational' work**

In order to relate best to Francis' work in this area, it is useful to understand his methodology and his application of it. While empirical research relating to the religiosity of young people has included work in both the qualitative and quantitative spheres, Francis is rooted clearly within the quantitative tradition. It is this quantitative investigation that allows for an in-depth analysis of adolescent beliefs and concerns, and as such enables a view into their world. While Francis has used and developed Fisher's idea of spiritual health (Francis, 2010, Francis & Robbins, 2005) it is important to recognise that he was involved in the pursuit of an empirical approach prior to this (Francis, 1984a, 1984b).

### **The benefit of a quantitative approach**

Francis has championed an empirical approach to seek to understand issues within education. He is not alone in calling for such an approach (Brannen, 2005; Fisher, 2009, 2010), but as subsequent parts of this chapter will show, he has shown how effective this methodology can be in the field of education within the UK. This is particularly true concerning the issue of spiritual health.

A further strength of how Francis has used this quantitative work is found in the way that he moves beyond understanding qualitative and quantitative research as two fundamentally different paradigms from which to engage with a subject. Instead he offers an approach towards a means of investigation based on the quantitative but that can be enhanced by the qualitative. This is evidenced in the use of his involvement

researching spiritual development in the book by Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017), where he is credited as being a key proponent of:

the theories and methods of quantitative studies ... designing surveys and trying to measure the ethos of ... schools, beginning with his first serious study in 1974. (Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017, p. x)

In this work, Francis' use of what is called 'the three quantitative strands' is well defined and foundational. Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) apply these strands as applied in the present study. The use of the three stands allows the exploration of spiritual health and frames the area of study. This foundation enables a springboard from which the data gathered may be operationalised and actioned.

The three strands considered involve, firstly, the elusive concept of 'ethos' and how this is expressed in a school. The need to understand the ethos of a school allows for an understanding of the context into which the data must be placed and the results debated. This is considered central to an investigation. Casson, Cooling, and Francis express this exploration of ethos as:

The overall set of values, attitudes and beliefs of students, that shape the environment into which a new student to the school is welcomed and by which that student may be shaped. The quantitative strand focused specifically on exploring the values, attitudes and beliefs of students. (Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017, p. 95)

Beginning the research here means that the scene is set to go beyond the official view generated by the school by hearing the voice of the students.

The second strand assesses the values, attitudes and beliefs held by the students within the school by the use of measurement. This access to information covers two areas:

Sometimes an area of values, attitudes or beliefs can be profiled by giving attention to the individual items. Sometimes an area of values, attitudes or beliefs can be profiled by developing scale scores that are measuring the student's responses to the underlying idea. (Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017, p. 95)

In this pursuit it is useful not just to gain a view of an individual school, but also to compare with other schools. These comparisons can involve like-for-like comparisons, such as one Anglican school with another. Equally, this involvement can evaluate the data by comparing schools of a different ethos, such as a non-denominational school with a school with a religious designation.

The third strand engages with the theoretical view of underlying motivations. This relates to the systems of nurturing and serving or supporting students. In the case of Carson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) this has a strong theological focus which may not be applicable to schools outside a particular religious tradition. In the case of the present study the philosophical basis for the school serves a similar role as does the religious character of a school. The present study also demonstrates the dialogue between the quantitative data generated by a survey conducted among the students and the qualitative data. This use of data enables a view beneath the surface of an institution. This can be seen in chapters 7 - 10 of this dissertation whereby the quantitative data collected is discussed in the context of four dialogical partners within and outside a particular school, known as 'School X'.

## **Defining spiritual health**

Francis' approach to spiritual health in schools and in general requires definition. In this pursuit, a central work is Francis and Robbins (2005), *Urban hope and spiritual health: The adolescent voice*. This provides focus for this chapter in the defining of spiritual health and to later discussion. In this the work of the Teenage Religion and Values Survey (TRVS) is pivotal to the concept of spiritual health and its operationalisation. This consideration will involve looking at why Francis adopts and develops Fisher's term. The development will consider the setting and definition of the term, followed by the approach to operationalising spiritual health. Then there is a reflection on the interpretation and analysis involved in this operationalisation.

## **Francis' understanding of spiritual health**

Spiritual health is defined as a means of measuring the wellbeing of an individual seeking to view all aspects of human life and experience. Francis and Robbins (2005) explain the concept in keeping with Fisher's definition (1998) of this in terms of the four domains while involving the whole person. This is also developed by Fisher, Francis, and Johnson (2000) and in a different format by Fisher and Francis (2013).

Working with this concept Francis (2010) writes:

the notion of the spiritual health of young people attempts to capture a holistic view that conceptualises human life in terms of more than the physical and more than the mental. In this sense, good spiritual health is not dependent on good physical health and good mental health, although it is clearly affected by them. (Francis, 2010, p. 7)

This approach is developed further with the statement that:

The intention of the present paper is three-fold; to advance a coherent model of spiritual health amendable to empirical operationalisation; to cite some empirical evidence on the spiritual health of 13–15-year-old adolescents; and to explore the impact of religious formation on spiritual health among this group of adolescents. (Francis, 2010, p. 7)

While the third of these intentions is not directly relevant to this paper, the first two offer a clear direction in terms of design and approach within this dissertation.

Francis uses Fisher while adding a clarity to the reasons for needing to consider spiritual health. The concept is placed usefully within the adolescent experience of schooling and beyond. It maps the data in a fashion that produces an insight into beliefs and attitudes. Francis and Robbins (2005) express this within the four domains discussed in relation to Fisher in chapter 2 of this dissertation. This provides a definitive insight into what spiritual health means in Francis' research. Firstly, there is the personal, that which is expressed in the individual's right relationship with themselves. Secondly, there is the communal, being a similar rightness with others. Thirdly, there is the environmental, being a person's relationship to the world in which they live. Finally, there is the transcendental, which is concerned with aspects of life beyond the 'ordinary', however this might be conceived. Such a healthy lifestyle would involve an expression of purposeful comfort with self and of good relationships with others. This would extend to a positive view of the surrounding community and a willingness to explore the transcendental, within whatever definition might be conceived.

Francis (2010) explains the need for the concept of spiritual health, as in the setting of School X, as enabling the adolescent voice to be heard. This builds on and interacts with his mapping of values. Francis and Robbins (2005) acknowledge that there has been a range of surveys concerning adolescent life, covering such aspects as urban or rural environments, social attitudes, feelings, politics and experiences of growth to adulthood. In this context they argue that the spiritual had not been brought to the fore. As such the work surrounding spiritual health filled a vacuum for an unresolved and important part of adolescent life. This was justified by the view that such a notion as spiritual health could be operationalised within empirical research in a manner that was 'robust and precise' (Francis & Robbins, 2005, p.25).

Francis' work takes place against changing attitudes to religious belief and spiritual expression in the UK. The role of religion was seen as decreasing and holding a less central position. Yet, the notion of spiritual development had come to be important within the educational world as a means of encountering the beliefs and values of school pupils. This is expressed in the view that:

the range of spiritual ideas available to young people living and growing up in England and Wales ... alongside the beliefs systems of the major faiths, there exist the popular beliefs of post-Christian culture and the assorted beliefs of the New Age perspective. (Francis, 2010, p. 11)

There is a desire to not only hear, but also to evaluate these beliefs from the view of what might be deemed to be, and not be, healthy. The discussion of this is facilitated by the use of the four domains (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, 2010; Robbins & Francis, 2010; Francis, Penny, & Baker; 2012.)

### **Examples to illustrate Francis' method**

As previously noted, it is important to understand the historical background to Francis' work because this indicates the flexibility and usefulness of his empirical operationalism in relation to spiritual health. The two examples that follow, both prior to Francis' engagement with Fisher, evidence his approach, using questionnaires to gather quantitative data from which to measure and comment on adolescent life, in school and beyond.

#### **The Cymca Attitude survey**

In this attitudinal survey there is a record over some forty years of a careful mapping of values. The context of this takes place in conversations with youth, such as 'Youth in Transit' study (Francis, 1982), and using the Centymca Attitude Inventory with a cohort of 1,085 16 – 25-year-old Londoners. While the age group involved differs from that in Francis' later research and in this paper (13 -15 years), the method and extent of the work offers an insight into the operational approach to follow. The work extended to studying youth unemployment (Francis, 1984a) and teenagers' attitudes to the church (Francis, 1984b). Francis (1984a) shows the developing style of this research, with a two-fold approach to analysis. There was an identification of the characteristics of those young people most likely to be unemployed, while logging and correlating this with an identification of the value correlates of those who had experienced unemployment. The result was a prediction as to which views and values were likely to be most prevalent among the unemployed. The purpose of drawing attention to this work is to show the rigour of this approach, and its usefulness. This is not directly related to the present study yet does provide an example of the direction

and efficacy of operating in this manner. Francis (1984b) does however, provide a clearer link to the research in this dissertation.

### **The Values Debate**

The use of the Centymca Attitude Inventory provides a model for Francis' further work concerning values. This substantial survey is explained in *The Values Debate* (Francis, 2001a). In this case the age range studied involves 13 – 15-year old adolescents and was based within a range of schools. As such attitudes were explored, in both State and Independent schools. This sample involved nearly 34,000 young people. This provides an interesting control for understanding school influence. The aim of the book was to fashion a body of evidence that provided an insight into the values of this sample. In the midst of all that the book offers, it is useful to note that questions were asked across a number of areas, leading to an exploration of how the values that emerged related to six particular factors. These factors were age, sex, social class, parental separation and divorce, television viewing, and church attendance. This enabled a researcher to compare responses to a particular question from within the different factors.

In this endeavour there are two aspects that are important for the use of such material in a school environment. The first aspect is that prior to understanding the influence of the school, there is a control relating to the backgrounds of the pupils. This enables the second aspect, in that this gives a depth and a flexibility of information. These data can usefully populate research carried out for internal school material, such as the School

Development Plan. As such the discussion is less about the detail of the gathering of the information, important as that is, and more about the analysis and use of the data.

### **Francis' subsequent work**

The work that Francis developed subsequent to that mentioned above engages with Fisher's view of spiritual health. This is undertaken as an individual (Francis 2010) and with other researchers (Fisher, Francis, & Johnson, 2000; Francis & Robbins, 2005; Robbins & Francis, 2010; Francis, Penny, & Baker 2010; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). In order to spare repetition and to give a fuller context, these works will form a basis for the ongoing discussion of the use of the concept of spiritual health. This discussion will consider the development of the theory into the fields of collection and analysis. Further to this, other examples will be considered with a view to understanding how such work can inform and enable a school's ethos and the spiritual development of individuals and institutional culture.

### **The use of spiritual health – moving from theory to collection and analysis**

It is important at this juncture to consider the operationalisation of the concept of spiritual health. This involves a consideration of three aspects. Initially there is the application of the theory in the data collection. Secondly there is the empirical analysis of the data. Finally, there is the interpretation and presentation of the data. The approach here involves a consideration that is based on Francis work (1982; 1984a; 1984b; 2001b), while looking at further investigations (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, 2010; Robbins & Francis, 2010; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012). In this body

of work there is the scaffold from which to consider the usefulness of the method within education. A key component of this will be to consider the acquisition of data that allows an insight into the spiritual wellbeing of individuals as well as groups in a school. It is important that this should allow for analysis and interpretation in a manner that can be reported by OfSTED.

Francis and Robbins' work *Urban Hope and spiritual health – The adolescent voice* (2005) provides a working example of this use of data. The investigation uses schools as a means of gathering data. This shows the efficacy of the operation in this area. The work of analysis and interpretation goes beyond what happens in schools to consider wider and more general issues. However, for the purpose of this work a useful example is provided which illustrates what can be achieved within a particular educational setting.

The evaluative process undertaken by Francis and Robbins (2005) involved an effective gathering of data. This is evidenced in the use of a questionnaire to gather information from nearly 34,000 pupils. The data provided covers a range of issues, such as personal differences, gender and age differences, the relevance of home background differences, school differences, attitudinal differences and religious affiliation. While these are separate areas, there is also a degree of interconnection. In this format there is ample data for analysis and interpretation. This is seen in Table 3: 1. This format shows the extensive nature of the investigation. It also offers a clear indication of the flexibility of this means of gathering and using data. Within this there are eighteen separate areas of

information, each splitting into the four domains. This allows for comparison and discussion.

Table 3:1 - To show the detail of investigation based on the TRVS data (Francis and Robbins, 2005)	
Area of Difference	Sub-sections of difference in relation to the four domains of spiritual health, with quotation and/ or comment, with a view to an educational setting.
<u>Personal differences – ch. 3.</u>	This covers Personal issues as suicidal intention; Communal issues as racism; Environmental issues as political powerlessness; Transcendental issues such as facing a myriad of competing beliefs.
<u>Gender and age Differences – chs. 4 &amp; 5.</u>	This covers 'sex differences' – ch.4 The data demonstrate a number of gender differences 'age differences' – ch.5 '...demonstrates that growth and development taking place during adolescence is so rapid that significant changes in spiritual health can be detected by snapshots taken just one year apart in year nine and in year ten.' p. 206.
<u>Home/ background differences – ch. 6-8 p. 207</u>	This covers Geographical differences – ch. 6 For example, the North-South divide, but for particular schools there will be a need to explore this further. Parental employment status – ch. 7 '...significant differences between young people living in homes with employed fathers and young people living in homes without employed fathers ...' – p.208 Family structure – ch. 8 '... there are significant differences between young people living in intact homes and young people living in broken homes across the four domains ...' p.209
<u>School differences – ch. 9-11, p. 210</u>	This covers Anglican/ Catholic/ 'Christian' schools Which generally offers a view of a positive effect on spiritual health p. 210f

<u>Attitudinal differences – ch. 12.</u>	This covers social factors – p. 212 “...there is no clear-cut relationship between social engagement and spiritual health.” p. 212 But there is enough data to make useful observations, such as ... high social engagement usually suggests a better spiritual health
<u>Religious affiliation – ch. 14 – 18.</u>	This covers Data consider that young people from a spiritual tradition in comparison with young people who belong to no religious tradition

The strength of this format can be evidenced with the following examples (Francis and Robbins, 2005). These examples have their own merit but allow a useful insight and benchmarking for school leaders. The data from the personal domain could be used to compare attitudes between pupils in Years 9 and 10 about their sense of worth, or happiness in school (pp. 224-5). In a similar fashion data from the communal domain could be operationalised to determine the voice of pupils in a non-denominational Christian school. This concerns their relationship with their parents (p. 263), and allows comparison with similar information from a Sikh context (p. 250.) In the environmental domain, one can compare the differences and similarities between male and female students in relation to the immigration issue (p. 223).

Following on from this, one is then able to delve deeper in reviewing the detail of the responses from Anglican (p. 233), Catholic (p. 235), Muslim (p. 254), Jewish (p. 247), Hindu (p. 249) and Sikh (p. 251) communities. The data relating to the transcendental domain provides an insight into adolescent views and well-being by offering an existential understanding. An issue such as belief in life after death is usefully considered on the basis of religious belief, but in schools, the data gives these a broader

insight. An example would be using data to inform how to focus the delivery of lessons on death, and whether or not a particular sub-group might respond differently from another. In this case, the responses are consistent, with those from Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Sikh backgrounds recording a higher level of belief compared to those from non-religious backgrounds (pp. 243–251). In terms of the ethos of a school, and the development of its curriculum, this is important information. In each case, the preceding chapters provide commentary on the data. Particularly useful is the ability to reference all of this data with that more general perspective of the ‘Overall Health Check’ (pp. 220-221) which provides the rudder of a comprehensive synopsis. This also provides a baseline for the use of similar research in particular schools.

In the fusion of a data-driven overview and in the rich source of detail, there is an approach that fulfils a requirement from OfSTED (DfE, 2014). This is that schools and inspectors are able to provide and use data in a manner that allows them to ‘drill down’ (DfE, 2014; ASCL, 2017). Such drilling involves presenting accurate data that can be accessed within the systems as a basis for benchmarking and developmental discussion. The fact that OfSTED allows for schools to find their own format with which to present this data (DfE, 2014), means that the flexibility shown in the Teenage Religion and Values survey can be adapted for individual schools. It allows the institution, and the inspectors, to survey and to respond to individuals and groups. Given that OfSTED expects school leadership to have expectation, aspirations and concepts of excellence that support and challenge pupils, this depth and detail facilitates necessary discussion. An example of this could be seen in the requirement that OfSTED (DfE, 2014) looks for evidence that schools have revised their curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils.

These data would be of use in determining an approach to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education. However, it should not be limited to this. The data ask questions relating to the wider curriculum of a school, and of how its ethos is being managed. This informs leadership and development.

The application of these concepts can be further usefully considered in the overview of the Teenage Religion and Values survey in Robbins and Francis (2010). The purpose and the usefulness of this research is that it combines data from both before, and after, Francis' involvement with Fisher. Data gathered by Francis (2001a) in *The Values Debate*, which is prior to his involvement with Fisher, is viewed and developed using methods operationalised by Francis and Robbins (2005). This shows the flexibility of such an approach. The scope of this research is explained as:

The Teenage Religion and Values Survey, established in the 1990s, generated a valuable and unique source of information about the place of religion in the lives of young people throughout England and Wales at the close of the twentieth century. Drawing on a large sample of 33,982 young people, the survey was able to profile the range of religious traditions visible within England and Wales, including representatives from the major world faiths (e.g. Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs), the smaller Christian denominations (e.g. Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians), and other sects (e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses). (Robbins & Francis, 2010, p. 3)

The foundational aspects of this research discuss the need for the empirical approach to effectively gather and use data. That which emerges becomes the voice of the young people researched, which is then mapped across fifteen areas. These were:

personal well-being, worries, counselling, school, work, politics, social concerns, sexual morality, substance use, right and wrong, leisure, the local area, religious belief, church and society, and the supernatural. (Robbins & Francis, 2010, p. 5)

This provides a ‘sophisticated statistical modelling’ that allows for the process of mapping the results. A strength of this approach is the inclusion of:

influences that are less visible individual differences focussed by personality psychology, exploring the concept of difference rooted in an individual’s biological nature. (Robbins & Francis, 2010, p. 6)

The key values come to the fore, as do the key areas of uncertainty or confusion. While this goes beyond the boundaries of a school, it does inform on aspects of life that influence schooling.

Robbins and Francis (2010) use these data to discuss the assessment of attitudes to religion, the effect of schools of a religious character in this area and psychological correlates of personal prayer. This is evidence of the flexibility of the data but is not the focus of this present work. There is, however, a recommendation that indicates the usefulness of such an approach. Within this there is also an observation that shall be discussed in the final chapter of this present work. In concluding the paper Robbins and Francis (2010) use the dynamic adaptation to note that future projects will necessitate the possibility of change. This is illustrated using the example of how the work from the early 1990s was usefully adapted and usefully operationalised at a later date.

There is a similar operationalisation in respect to this methodology in two further papers, both subsequent to Francis' engagement with Fisher. In Francis (2010) and also in Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012) there is evidence of this methodology. Francis (2010) provides a reflective overview of the nature of spiritual health, then analyses afresh the data from *The Values Debate* (2001) to operationalise a profile of the data within the four domains of spiritual health (p. 11). Francis then draws an important conclusion that illustrates the importance of this approach. It is a conclusion that is practically and pastorally focused. Writing in the context of the United Kingdom, this is explained in the following manner:

If the Fisher relational model of spiritual health is accepted as a conceptually and empirically valid index of spiritual health of young people, the current data suggest that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the nation may well be advised to listen to the uncertainty and to the discontent of significant numbers of young people, for whom things are far from well in the spiritual health domains. Moreover, if the spiritual health of adolescents can be interpreted as a barometer of the spiritual health of the nation, the data are worth taking seriously. (Francis, 2010, p. 12)

Here is good reason for the use of Francis' approach both to gather information and to enable a response.

Robbins and Francis (2010) engage in a similar study. Here the focus particularly considers the 13 – 15-year-old pupils attending secular and Anglican Schools, as well as those within independent Christian schools in England and Wales. The paper builds on Fisher (1998) and Francis and Robbins (2005) in an attempt to operationalise the four domains of spiritual health. This involved some 34,000 secondary pupils within these schools. This provided comparative data for pupils in Years 9 and 10 across the

three different foundations of school. The data profiled the different ethos within different schools and the effect this had on the delivery of the curriculum as exhibited in the spiritual health of the pupils. In this research it is possible to consider a link between ethos and spiritual health. This link provides another benchmark as to how effectively a school can be considered to be educating its pupils. In this there is a useful tool for school leaders to consider.

### **The Educational application of spiritual health research – moving from analysis to planning, practice and development**

For the purpose of this work it is important to offer examples to evaluate further the definition and the operationalisation of Francis' approach to spiritual health. This evaluative process continues in defined educational settings. This section considers particular examples that relate to the analysis and use of the data in schools. This extends the previous considerations to understanding how the analysis might inform whole school judgements on matters of practice. This is applied to the areas that follow, that of future planning, practice and development.

Leaver (2009) shows how the spiritual health questionnaire can be used in a specific area, or specific school, or group of schools. As such this pursuit builds on Francis' work by applying the methodology in the context of a comprehensive school in South Manchester. Leaver notes that:

Fisher's definition of spiritual health has been a helpful one, and his questionnaires, which allow the pupils to evaluate their ideal and actual

spiritual health, enormously helpful in identifying trends within the school. It must be noted that whilst staff at other schools would identify with my findings, no other quantitative studies have been carried out for a formal comparison. (Leaver, 2009, p. 29)

This suggests that the present research, with its focus on Francis is well directed, in trying to move beyond one school and in trying to see if there is value to adding the qualitative to the quantitative. Leaver (2009) is aware that the research does not necessarily lead to ‘mind-blowing’ conclusions (p. 39) yet is clear of its usefulness in evidencing what might be seen as a spiritual climate within a school. Building on the quantitative, Leaver proceeds to develop an investigation of the qualitative, by discussing aspects of schooling. These are split into the formal and informal. For school leaders, this offers a validity to the methodology in relation to gathering information and defining ethos. The formal covers gatherings such as collective worship, such as formal assemblies and the Remembrance Day service (pp. 31 - 32). The informal areas focus on the Christmas service and the concept of ‘soul space’ (pp. 33 – 37). Both the formal and the informal present a useful comment on how to consider and enable the ethos of a school. Leaver’s research certainly suggests that the time has come to experiment with, and possibly develop the ideas of Fisher and Francis, moving into a range of smaller or more precise contexts.

Prior discussion has considered Francis (2010) and Robbins and Francis (2012) in their reinterpretation of data in order to explore spiritual health. The work of Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) further evidences the flexibility of Francis’ quantitative methodology by exploring its use to inform school leadership about student development. This demonstrates how to gather, to use and to apply quantitative data in

the environment of a school. The investigation by Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) involved working within ten institutions considered to be leading schools in this area. The focus is within the context of a Christian ethos. Of the ten schools, eight designated themselves as Church of England, one shared a Catholic and Anglican designation, and the final school was the Oasis Academy, being sponsored by Oasis Community Learning. Within this particular group, with their shared Christian foundations, there is still a diverse selection of different approaches to the expression of faith and to schooling.

There are significant areas of difference to Francis and Robbins' (2005) work with the Values survey in that *Lessons in spiritual development* (Casson, Cooling, and Francis, 2017) looks at spiritual development solely within Christian ethos schools. The survey is of attitudes towards Christianity across Years 7 to 11, rather than just that of Years 9 and 10. As such, while this is a different trajectory from this present dissertation, it shares similar roots, highlighting the flexibility of this approach. *The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity* has its origins in work from the 1970s. The survey of values from 2001 also fashions the work of Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017).

Where there is a useful connection in terms of empirical study is in the use of questionnaires to harvest a rich source of data. This provides an informed overview, but also a depth of detail. Given the importance of ethos to wellbeing in schools this work provides a useful example of using data to drive discussion and practice. While the first aspect of the project's methodology is to gather research from a quantitative perspective, there is then a progression that debates important issues. A number of these

issues are relevant to all schools. Matters involving the removal of barriers to life, the need to develop an empowered community of students, how to prioritise hope and inclusivity and encouraging enquiry are the business of all schools. While some of the other areas of debate, such as enhancing theological literacy and encouraging gospel values, are more easily located in a school with a Christian ethos.

Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) offer an exemplar of how to proceed considering the implications of the research for evaluating and investigating particular schools. This can be seen especially in the more general discussion about where the students commented on spiritual development (p. 86). Of the four areas, the development of self, the community, the environment, on a deepening of knowledge and understanding relating to a relationship with the divine, all could usefully be applied in a spectrum of schools, albeit with adaptation. Secondly, the research reflects on how a school can think strategically and act deliberately on the basis of the data (p. 89). This is argued with an awareness of the need for the pupil voice to be heard within a school community. It is important to note the recognition that context is key, in that:

Schools do not operate in a vacuum; the nature of the student population inevitably influences the form that spiritual development may take within a school. (Casson, Cooling, and Francis 2017, p. 90)

Here the general data, and the individual institution's data form an interaction. Francis (1982, 2001, 2010), Francis and Robbins (2005), Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012), Robbins and Francis (2010) all show how the nature of a population being studied can be accessed and discussed. In this measurement enables clarity.

The use of measurement as a basis for clarity is explored in the structure of the work by Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017). The context and the mission of each school is considered, involving quantitative material and case studies. Within the context of dealing with inclusivity one case study looks at how:

one Christian-ethos school prioritises the needs of the most vulnerable, and the influence this has on the spiritual development of all students and staff.

(Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017, p. xiv)

This example places a priority on matters relating to inclusion such as belonging, perseverance, a willingness to foster to open and positive relationship, a sense of purpose and building a community respectful of difference. All schools should aspire to such ideals and this work provides an interesting discussion about how to proceed. Whatever the difference of the contexts, this book recommends Francis' quantitative approach as a means of gathering data for interpretation, as a means to analysis and development.

## **Conclusion**

At this juncture an overview of how Francis provides a basis for the following investigation in this dissertation is important. In this chapter, the aforementioned works indicate clear evidence for six areas where Francis' empirical approach is of use to school leaders. This is evident in that

- i. Francis' work delves into the cultures and concepts, the beliefs and values of 13 - 15-year-olds, allowing school leaders to access the voice that is hard to come by. (See Francis & Robbins, 2005)

- ii. Francis' work demonstrates for school leaders how different values associated with particular schools, and the cultures that are built upon them affect the spiritual health of young people. This particularly relates to the concept of ethos. (See Francis & Robbins, 2005; Robbins & Francis, 2010; Francis, Robbins, & Baker, 2012; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017)
- iii. Francis' work demonstrates for school leaders how different cultures within a particular school can affect spiritual health. An example of this is how the school's sporting prowess may enable or disadvantage an individual's social engagement. (See Francis & Robbins, 2005; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017)
- iv. Francis' work demonstrates for school leaders such aspects of an individual's being, such as religious formation, can have a determining influence. (See Francis, 2010; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017)
- v. Francis' work demonstrates for school leaders how an empirical approach can be usefully adapted to be a tool for both the pupils, and for those who are involved in school leadership. (See Casson, Cooling, and Francis, 2017)
- vi. Francis' work demonstrates for school leaders the importance of considering how best to use empirical data to measure aspects of school life that affect considerations of ethos and school leadership. (See Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017.)

In the light of these six conclusions, Table 3:2 highlights possible applications from the spiritual health questionnaire to illustrate how the student voice can prompt direct reflection for school leaders. It is clear from the work carried out during the debate about values, and the work of the Teenage Religion and Values survey, that this

approach can, and ought, to adapt to the changing landscape of society and youth cultures. This is highlighted in Robbins and Francis (2010) where there is reference to:

Quantitative research that introduces new measures and new conceptual fields to reflect ... the changing worldviews and changing vocabulary of young people. (Robbins & Francis, 2010, p. 18)

This is reflected in the progression of the values map throughout the period discussed in this dissertation. It is also reflected in the work of Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) where the qualitative and quantitative are fused to fashion data-driven pragmatic approach, albeit on the basis of the quantitative. This is essential material from which school leadership needs to operate.

Table 3:2 - To show examples of how the application of each of the domains of spiritual health (Francis,2010) in a secondary school informing school leadership.

Domain	Working definition (Using Francis, 2010, pp.9 - 10)	Usefulness for school – in the format of questions to be answered by the data generated by the questionnaire.
Personal	“... what young people believe about themselves ... what young people feel about themselves”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does life at school encourage a feeling of worth?</li> <li>• How does the situation at school mean that on occasion pupils consider taking their own life?</li> </ul>

Communal	“... what young people believe about those, in one sense or another, they share their lives”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do pupils feel supported in their education by those around them?</li> <li>• How do pupils worry about bullying others, or being bullied themselves?</li> </ul>
Environmental	“... what young people believe and feel about their connectedness with the natural, physical and human global environments”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the time pupils spend in school help them to relate to issues of global concern, such as pollution?</li> <li>• How do pupils feel that the school enables them to consider helping to solve the world’s problems?</li> </ul>
Transcendental	“... what young people believe and feel about those aspects of life that transcend the ordinary, everyday account of the physical environment”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the school help pupils to consider deep issues, such as the existence of love?</li> <li>• How does the school help pupils to deal with the question of whether or not there is life after death?</li> </ul>

It is an important consideration for school leaders that the adolescent voice is allowed to offer a judgement of a situation and a determination of what is required in the future. This is of use for school leaders and it is for those in leadership to respond.

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## **Chapter: 4 – Concerning ethos and the Spiritual Health Questionnaire**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the concept of ethos that has already been alluded to. The aim here is to create a bridge between the discussions concerned with spiritual health in the previous chapters and that of the nature of the concept of ethos. It is hoped that this proves accessible for the later discussions concerning a particular school in relation to school leadership. Put simply, the aim of this chapter is to provide a definition for an empirical approach to the concept of ethos, that has a degree of precision within its practical approach. Such an approach provides a ‘benchmark’ (Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012) in order to compare the data in an empirically driven manner. The fact that this is the proper concern of school leadership is seen in West-Burnham (2002) and West-Burnham & Jones (2008).

Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) point out that it is the principal and the senior leadership in any school who fulfil the key role of setting the ‘tone’ for the school environment (p. 6). It is this ‘tone’ that relates to ethos. It is this ‘tone’ that enables an understanding of the context of an institution prior to the gathering of data, and the subsequent discussion on the basis of that data. Similar arguments are voiced by Donnelly (2000) and Fullan (2003).

The task of this chapter in defining ethos involves work of Fisher in chapter two, and that of Francis in chapter three, as well as what follows after this chapter. The bridge is constructed within a discussion about the concept of ethos in schooling. Here the task is one of operational definition. In order to achieve this there will be a brief look at the link between ethos and spirituality. This will then be followed by a consideration of the link between spiritual health and ethos. This understanding forms the basis from which school leadership is able to make decisions about the present state of a community and its future needs. Once this has been completed, the areas of research agenda, methodology, the sample, as well as the instrument and analysis will be considered in greater depth. In fact, a dialogue will be commenced.

### **Ethos and spirituality**

As mentioned at the end of the last chapter, and above, it is important to emphasise that the concept of 'ethos' holds a crucial position in this research. The discussion of ethos is a broad one, and spirituality has been an important consideration in this. This breadth of debate is capable of providing a foundation for the importance of ethos. A working structure from outside the education world, but still relevant for schools is visible in the concept that:

Spirituality and ethics come together most strongly in the idea of ethos. Ethos can be summed up as the distinctive character, spirit and attitudes of a group or of a community. As such it is something about the distinctive values and meaning of that community, but also the actual practice of those values. It is thus summed up not just in concepts, but also in how people behave to each other, including the tone of communication. The ethos is discovered in

relationship, in attention given, or not given, to the other, in concern for key values and principles in purposes in practice, and so on. (Parry, 2007, p. 186.)

This offers distinctive and pragmatic aspects of ethos visible in the expression of values in relationship and behaviour. In this setting, the qualitative and the quantitative can combine to inform one another, on the basis of the data. The use of the term 'ethos' involves an understanding of a range of the combination of aspects of school life.

This return to the idea of ethos is because the focus of this undertaking involves an understanding of the concept, and of how this can be used in comparison with other sources of data. The extent of this undertaking is evident in the discussion the term engenders. Hemming (2011), writing from a sociological perspective, credits ethos as providing a 'lens' with which to view the real values and practice of a school, but also of society in general. In reaching this conclusion his research studied two different models of schooling, seeking to understand the role religion (or spiritual health) plays in the public space. In so doing he adopted a methodology that involved qualitative research.

The debate about the definition and use of ethos in education is not new (Bigger & Brown, 1999, 2013; Carr, 2006; Fisher, 1999, 2001). In the context of education, this finds particular focus in the work of Wright (2000a, 2000b) and Bragg & Manchester (2011). There is within this an awareness that a consideration of ethos involves an understanding of both the positive side of spirituality, as well as 'the dark side' (de Souza, 2012). Fisher (2006) uses such insights to mould the spiritual health of individuals and institutions. Francis has written on this topic, returning to the concept in

recent research (Francis, 2010; Robbins and Francis, 2010; Francis, Penny, & Baker 2012; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). This approach gathers data that illustrates both light and shade.

Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012 p. 352) note (when discussing spiritual development) the ‘vague and imprecise ways’ in which the term ethos is used. The same is true of much debate about ethos. This touches on atmosphere, practice and action, relationships, purposefulness, beliefs or values, as well as achievement and attainment. In order to attempt some ongoing definition, the following consideration of what ethos might look like in a school, and how it might be used, forms the basis for the later comparison of data. As such, this definition is essential to the methodology and operation. In Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) ethos is seen as that basis which provides an insight into the nature of the institution. It is a signage, or the benchmark, towards the strengths and weaknesses of the structure and the experience.

### **Defining ethos in education**

In the context of education, Bragg and Manchester (2011) opted to establish a dynamic definition of ethos. Their aim was to find a working model that allowed for an understanding of the term, but also enabled a flexibility so as to encompass the breath of the concept. The concept also has to be able to deal with the developmental range of pupils within a school, whether primary or secondary. In doing so, the aim of Bragg and Manchester was to move beyond the discussion as to whether ethos is best considered as a ‘climate’ or a ‘culture’. As such they looked for ‘factors’ that would

explain the prominence and efficacy of ethos. The model they determine is lengthy but does permit a working basis that fits with the SHQ's use of student-centred data. This fit can be seen in the definition involving concepts such as learning, values and interactions. Bragg and Manchester (2011) formulate their model on the following distinctions:

Ethos has been identified as a **contributor to school effectiveness**, and therefore as an expedient (low-cost) solution to improving performance:

- Ethos is also used to describe the (pre)conditions **for learning**'.
- School ethos **as learning**' – how it is organized and run - offers important learning experiences for young people about the nature of society and their place and agency in it. (Bragg & Manchester, 2011 p. 1, bold as in text)

The above however still requires some definition, since:

Ethos can be mobilized in such varied and sometimes conflicting ways in part because it remains a nebulous concept: an atheoretical and “empty signifier” that can be filled with meanings to suit different contexts, purposes and speakers. (Bragg & Manchester, 2011, p. 2)

On this basis, Bragg and Manchester put forward the following definition. It shows a degree of complexity and flexibility reflecting the nature of the concept. The benefit is that it allows for aspiration as well as immediate intent. They proceed with the following attempt at definition:

Our **definition of ethos** stresses the following:

Ethos unavoidably embodies **values** and a **vision of society** - even in 'describing' a school's ethos an observer or researcher draws on particular interpretive and evaluative frameworks; these may be more or less explicit, but they cannot be neutral or absent.

Ethos is both **official** and **unofficial** – that is, it cannot be read off from the versions made available by school management and a range of perspectives on

it should be sought, including ‘from below’. (Bragg & Manchester, 2011, p. 2, with the bold type as in text)

This view is then further developed as follows:

Ethos emerges from **everyday** processes of **relationships** and **interactions** and it concerns **norms** rather than exceptions; research benefits from extended immersion in schools to grasp these shared, mundane experiences.

Ethos is in some respect intangible, to do with the ‘**feel**’ of a school, with that which is experienced but, since it is also **taken for granted**, may **not easily** be **articulated**. Thus, accounts given by insiders may need to be supplemented by critical analysis from external observers.

Ethos also, however, emerges from **material** and **social** aspects of the **environment**; research should take these into account rather than assuming that the intangible nature of ethos makes them irrelevant.

Ethos is **continually negotiated** by those within the school rather than simply imposed once and for all; members of school communities are active agents in defining and redefining ethos. (Bragg & Manchester, 2011, p. 2; bold type in text)

This definition allows for the changing nature and culture, or climate, of education in general, schools in particular, especially year groups. In suggesting that the valuable accounts of those inside an institution are supplemented by critical analysis from external observers, this definition also advocates a combination of internal and external data. This is an approach adopted within this dissertation.

How this is understood and used is important. Weare and Nind (2011) argue for an approach that uses this information to look at the underlying values of a school’s culture. This involves:

the attitudes that the school represent, particularly in relation to the way staff and students treat one other, the development of bonds between youth and adults, and the increased opportunities and recognition for youth participation. (Weare & Nind, 2011, p. 61)

### **The use of the concept of ethos**

An example of the outworking of such an understanding of ethos can be found in Bowater (2014). This is particularly relevant since the comments refer to the school that is the focus of this dissertation. The context of this writing is the successful recruitment and progress of sixth-form pupils. This process involves working with those pupils who would be undertaking the SHQ within the school during the period of this investigation. One of the key strands involved in this engagement is the expectation and the management of ethos. This management requires an understanding of how matters are viewed by the pupils. When writing of changing the ethos of the educative interaction, the following point is presented:

We aim to have a different relationship between students and tutors. We aim to have a different relationship with students than we did lower down the school. We urge students to buy into this ... it has to be a joint effort – students and staff working together – to get the grades that students both want and deserve. (Bowater, 2014. p. 17)

If this is the case, how the concept of ethos is managed, both explicitly and implicitly, is important, and this should be discernible when using the spiritual health questionnaire. The nature of the ethos should be identifiable both in the individual and group responses to the questionnaire, as well as in the comparison with other schools. Hence this approach to the research agenda, method, sample, analyses, results and discussion.

The above definitions argue for the importance of ethos in leading a school. As such the fluidity of the concept informs educational management and leadership. Striepe, Clarke, and O'Donoghue (2014) argue that this is important for a leadership perspective because:

The distinct contexts of ... schools, which derive from their distinguishing purposes, characteristics and ethos that influence the school's aims and environments are particularly amenable for developing insights into understandings and practices of educational leadership. (Striepe, Clarke, & O'Donoghue, 2014, p. 87)

This is relevant when one considers the comment on the data generated by the questionnaire. This is also important since the leadership of a school would have a particular view of the school's ethos and its efficacy. The data allows an insight into the reality of perceptions in the year groups questioned. This in turn provides a basis for comment on each dimension and discussion in the concluding sections, which in turn allows for the possibility of effective adaptation and change.

### **The opportunity the spiritual health questionnaire provides**

The SHQ is employed for the reason it builds on and investigates the concept of ethos. This goes deeply into the heart or the ethos of the school by offering the provision of hard evidence of an area that is difficult to gauge.

Particularly useful is the fact that this exploration takes place beginning with the perspective of the pupils' views being central to the research and to the definition of a

school's ethos. Hence, this facilitates an opportunity which enables a school leadership to consider:

The place of ethos in much current educational thinking and debates makes it all the more important to know how to define it; how to identify it in situ; how to effect change in ethos, and what impact that change might have. However, there are few convincing answers to such questions. (Bragg & Manchester, 2011, p. 10)

The strength of this approach is that it operationalises an investigation from a quantitative basis.

The SHQ allows for the school the opportunity to review its delivery of education in these areas and to do so in a manner that focuses on a student-centred context, rather than policy. While there has been much debate about exactly how the concept of ethos is best defined, the work of Bragg and Manchester (2011) and of Weare and Nind (2011) provides a basis, and that of Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) enables an estimation of where the 'signs' lead. This finds practical expressions in the evaluation of ethos, from the perspective of spiritual health (in this case between schools of differing designations), in the work of Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012). This investigation provides a pragmatic insight into the nature of understanding and measuring ethos and establishes a useful framework for schools to take on the issues raised in a constructive and data-driven manner. In their different contexts, both the research of Bragg and Manchester (2011), as well as that of Weare (2013) and of Weare and Nind (2011) offer a pragmatic approach that is similar. In Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) there is an example of the combination of approaches across 'ten leading schools' with a Christian ethos. This body of knowledge provides a means of going forward.

## **Conclusion**

The above provides an understanding of the complexity of the concept of ethos in education, but also continues the argument that the works of Francis and Robbins (2005) and Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012) enables a significant operational approach on a quantitative basis. The work by Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) is able to provide evidence of how this approach can be applied in schools. As such school leadership have a tool with which to better understand how the school community is responding to their direction. This dissertation now proceeds the methodology and the agenda of this task.

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## **Chapter 5 - The research methodology**

### **Introduction**

The context is vital in evaluating spiritual health within a school. This need is met not simply by understanding the nature and praxis of a school institution. It is also imperative to have a clear view of the approach to the research. The purpose of this chapter is to give an outline to the approach adopted in this work, which owes a clear debt to the work of Francis and Robbins (2005). That this is the proper concern of school leadership is seen in West- Burnham (2002) and West-Burnham & Jones (2008).

### **Research Agenda**

Bearing in mind the focus on a comparison of data in order to investigate the ethos of School X, the aim of this study is to work within the research of Francis (and Fisher) with an understanding of the lens of school leadership. In both Fisher (1998, 2004, 2011a, 2011b), and Francis (see Francis & Robbins, 2005; and Francis, Penny, & Baker 2012), the concept of ‘spiritual health’ is assessed in various differing educative environments. This present work follows that of the latter two examples, in:

utilising Fisher’s model of spiritual health as operationalised by Francis and Robbins (2005) in order to compare the profile of Year 9 and 10 pupils (13 to 15 years of age). (Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012, p. 365).

This present work also follows the similar approach in the aforementioned work by Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012.) The difference comes in that this work looks only at

the cohort in a particular school, and then seeks comparisons with the body of previous research. This allows for a double or comparative benchmarking.

The particular importance in this context is the ‘Spiritual Health Questionnaire’ (SHQ) as designed for use in schools by Francis (2001). Fisher (1998) studies similar areas as those dealt with in the SHQ but has a focus on the views of teachers. This extends to considering the views of those teaching Aboriginal youth (1998, p. 74) and of the Waldorf (Steiner) School (1998, p. 74). In Francis, there is the application and development of the theory within the European setting. Francis researches in a range of schools of differing denominations and none (Francis & Robbins, 2005). There is also a view of those of other faiths – Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Sikhs. Francis and Robbins (2005) make it clear that their purpose in using the concept of spiritual health is to enable the opportunity to listen to young people. This focus requires the researcher to be able ‘to provide secure information about the values of year-nine and year-ten pupils’ (2005, p. 17). The aim initially in 2005 was building on previous research, to build a sizable database which would allow insight to a range of views within subsets. For example, the difference of views about the issue of abortion between Anglican and Catholic youth who regular attended church. While there is ample evidence of specific issues, it is important to keep the focus of this process providing a benchmark for distinctives generally to aid an understanding of the ethos within each cohort.

In this research, the aim involves a desire to use the concept of spiritual health as a means of providing a benchmark in of particular relevance to School X. Firstly, this is to see if the application of the spiritual health questionnaire to a ‘Gifted and Talented’

scenario would work in comparison with other work in differing situations and overall. Secondly, to see if the spiritual health questionnaire allowed a fuller and deeper picture of this concept within a school than the present OfSTED guidance on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education. An important aspect of this is to engage in a dialogue between the results of the spiritual health questionnaire and other documents of relevance, in order to make this assessment. Finally, there is the need to consider the importance of this discussion for the leadership of the school. The basis for this investigation is the comparison of from the SHQ and the correlation of this with the concept of ethos as manifest within 'school X'.

In this pursuit the purpose of this research project is to look at a small section of a particular group (and by so doing, add to the greater body of research). The group designated as 'Gifted and Talented' has (to date) not been the subject of particular study. The questions that this raises, relate to whether or not the questionnaire is relevant to this group. It asks what can be gleaned from an insight into those traditionally successful within an education system. It also raises two other questions. More generally, there is a question as to whether or not there a significant difference between the 'Gifted and Talented' and a 'comprehensive' school body. More specifically, what can this research tell of how such a group view their lives and their belonging to the cultures they inhabit?

## Method

It is worthwhile to recall (as stated in chapter three) that this work does not consider all that Francis has contributed to the debate about the use of empirical data to understand spiritual health, nor the intricacy of the questionnaires Francis designed in this pursuit. Rather this work uses an already established approach, already working in School X, and beyond. The methodology involved following that designed by Francis (Francis & Robbins, 2005). It works from the basis of the Teenage Religion and Values research discussed in chapter three. The school was already involved in the Francis' national program to measure the spiritual health of adolescents, between the ages of 13–15 in schools. The information gathered from these questionnaires was submitted as part of the national program, but the resulting data was also used for the purpose of this present dissertation.

The spiritual health questionnaire was administered, across the time period, during the pupils' Personal, Social, Health Education lessons, known as PSHE. Brown, Busfield, O'Shea, and Sibthorpe (2011) show how the use of PSHE as a means for gathering such information in schools is one that is effectively used by a number of researchers. Such an activity is in itself a form of dialogue that, at best, allows for the adolescent voice to be heard. The groups that were employed in School X were the pupils' form groups, and as such were a natural environment in which to administer the questionnaire. In all cases the member of staff who oversaw how the questionnaire was administered ensured that this process was consistent. This was not the present researcher but one of his colleagues, who had attended a lecture and seminar given by

Professor Francis in order to be aware of what the concept of ‘Spiritual Health’ involved, and how the questionnaire functioned.

As such this approach was in keeping with the procedure used by Francis and Robbins (2005), by Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012) and by Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) in listening to the centrality of the pupil voice. It is generally agreed by researchers that hearing the voice of the pupils within a school is essential, especially when comparing the pupils’ perceptions with those of the school teachers and administrators. This view finds support also in Graham (2012). In the present exploration, the research by questionnaire was administered in normal class RS/ PSHE groups. The spiritual health questionnaire booklets were used and pupils were asked to fill in the questionnaire anonymously. Pupils were given the choice not to participate, but none chose this option. In keeping with the ‘2012 procedure’ all pupils were assured of confidentiality.

The results for the questionnaire in School X were then compared with others in the work of Francis, Penny and Baker (2012). Of particular interest, in this context, was the comparison with the 5,346 pupils from 26 schools without a religious character, but within the state-maintained sector.

In order to assess the responses of the School X pupils, the following chapter will engage a dialogue between the returns from the spiritual health questionnaire and three other documents generated within the context of the school – the school’s review

process, the school's most recent OfSTED report (from 2013), and comments about the school contained in 'The Good School Guide, (2014)'. In so doing, the accounts given by the pupils are "supplemented by critical analysis from external observers" (Bragg & Manchester, 2011, p. 24.) This enables a further evaluation of the content of the responses by providing a comparison between differing perceptions.

## **Context**

The sample was small, being taken within the particular context of one school. (However, it should be remembered that the data was originally gathered as a part of a national survey, and then used in this research.) The school is a selective State school, and as such the cohort examined can be described as being 'Gifted and Talented', or close to that designation. It is also a single sex school (in the Years 7 -11) and as such this adds a further distinctive characterisation within the returns. The description of the school, (as explained on p.17, but repeated here for clarity,) that is given in the OfSTED report of 2013 describes School X as having:

converted to an academy in January 2011. When the predecessor school ..., was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding. This oversubscribed school is smaller than the average secondary school with a sixth form. It is also unusual in that it has boarding provision for 90 boys. The large sixth form accepts boys and girls from the wider area... The student population is stable with very few students joining or leaving the school partway through the year...The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is much lower than the national average... Very few students are eligible for support through the pupil premium, the additional funding provided by the government for students who are looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or children of service families ... A much smaller than average proportion of students are disabled or

have special educational needs, supported through school action, school action plus or a have statement of special educational needs. The school does not use alternative provision. (OfSTED/ School X 2013, p. 3).

Also, and of relevance, is that despite a situation of rurality, the school has a diverse ethnic mix. However, it must be noted that, as the OfSTED report comments, this is below the national average. This diversity is achieved by two factors. The boarding community contains overseas pupils, including some from Hong Kong and others from West Africa. There is also a cultural mix of pupils within the 'day' community of the school, where a number of the respondent's commute from the surrounding urban areas. This means that all the main religious faiths are represented with the second largest group after 'Christian' being Muslim students, in both the boarding and day communities.

### **Procedure**

The procedure was that the questionnaire was used with pupils in Y9 and 10 across the period of the academic years 2012-2014. This means that the pupils involved had generally been at the school for a reasonable period of time, being in at least their third academic year. As such, it can be assumed that the cohorts have formed familiarity with, and an opinion of, the intended ethos of the school. It is also reasonable to assume that they have had sufficient time to be influenced by it (for better or worse). In the first cohort, there were 192 participants, while in the second there were 164. The fall in numbers is explained due to the use of SHQ at a slightly later point in the year. All the participants were male.

During the period of this research the school in question became an academy. There is no evidence, at this point, to suggest that this will have had an effect on the results. However, there is also no evidence, at this point, to compare the data from previous studies with that of the new 'Academy' structure of schools. It does however remain an interesting focus for the future.

### **Instrument**

The 'Spiritual Health Questionnaire' questionnaire (SHQ) contained 189 items arranged for responses on a five-point scale, following a Likert-type scale. This comprised of *agree strongly*, *agree*, *not certain*, *disagree* and *disagree strongly*. (The italics used here mirror the use of this mode when introducing these concepts within the quoted text.) Following the work of Francis and Robbins (2005) and Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012), seven items were employed to assess each of Fisher's four domains of spiritual health: personal, communal, environmental and transcendental.

In order to gain further clarity, it is worth considering the manner in which the seven items function as questions within each domain. Francis and Robbins (2005) explain how the Values map included in the teenage religion and values survey provided multiply indicators of each of these four domains. Their aim was:

to select ... seven indicators for each of the four domains, a total of 28 key questions. (Francis & Robbins 2005, p. 40)

Francis and Robbins (2005) acknowledge that the selection of just seven items was

a weakness and a strength. Firstly, the weakness was recognised in the use only seven indicators being an inadequate sample ‘to represent such broad conceptual categories’ (Francis & Robbins, 2005, p. 40.) Secondly, the strength of the strategy was that:

a small number of well-chosen indicators permits proper care and due weight to be given to the discussion of each one, and allows the full set of indicators to be run against quite a wide range of factors. (Francis & Robbins, 2005, p. 40)

The indicators involved in each domain are highlighted in Tables 5: 1 – 4. The personal domain, as evidenced in Table 5; 1, considers what young people believe and feel about themselves. The aim of the questions is to consider the general level of personal wellbeing, as well as the individual’s consideration of their quality of life.

Table 5: 1 - The seven indicators relating to the Personal Domain. (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel my life has a sense of purpose               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I find life really worth living</li> </ul> </li> <li>• I feel I am not much worth as a person               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I often feel depressed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• I have sometimes considered taking my own life</li> <li>• I often long for someone to turn to for advice               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am happy in my school</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The communal domain engages with young people’s beliefs and attitudes in relation to those within their world. The focus here is located in matters that are outside the individuals’ control. These areas are the individual’s relationship with their parents, their friends and their school. The seven indicators in this domain are presented in Table 5: 2. In this domain the questions address the key areas of an individual’s view

and interaction with their world. In this there is evidence to inform a debate about the key skills an individual's needs to proceed from adolescence to adulthood.

Table 5: 2 – The seven indicators relating to the Communal Domain.  
(Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012)

- I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex
- I am worried about how I get on with other people
- I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mum
- I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my dad
  - I find it helpful to talk about my problems  
with close friends
  - I am worried about being bullied at school
  - I like the people I go to school with

The environmental domain questions the individual's feelings of connection to, or separation from, the physical world in which they live. In this there is a consideration of their local and global attitudes. The indicators ask for a response to the areas presented in Table 5: 3.

Table 5:3 - The seven indicators relating to the Environmental Domain.  
(Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012)

- I think immigration in Britain should be restricted
- I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment
  - I am concerned about the poverty of the developing  
world (e.g. Africa)
    - I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war
    - There is nothing I can do to help solve the  
world's problems
  - I would like to make a difference in the world
- There are too many foreign people in this country

The final domain, that of the transcendental domain, considers the aspects of life that are outside the normal realm of daily life. An example of this is the questioning of issues relating to beliefs about ultimate concern. As such, considerations of a belief in God or the afterlife probed are in order to gather detailed data. This is achieved with questions relating to the indicators in Table 5: 4. Such matters were seen to be of crucial concern in a multicultural society.

<p>Table 5:4 - The seven indicators relating to the Transcendental Domain. (Francis &amp; Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, &amp; Baker, 2012)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I believe in God</li> <li>• I believe in life after death</li> <li>• The church seems irrelevant to life today             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I believe in my horoscope</li> </ul> </li> <li>• I believe fortune-tellers can tell the future</li> <li>• I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead</li> <li>• Prayer helps me a lot</li> </ul>

It is important to understand the contexts in which the information is gathered and the values mapped. The results gathered for each domain can be found in Francis & Robbins, 2005, pp. 220 – 521. These results are broken down into an overall health check followed by the consideration of fifteen other groupings. These groups include results relating to the following categories - ‘male and female’, ‘growing older’, ‘north and south’, ‘employed fathers’, ‘broken homes, Anglican schools’, ‘Catholic schools, ‘Christian schools’, ‘social engagement’, ‘personal prayer’, ‘Christians’, Muslims’, ‘Jews’, ‘Hindus’ and Sikhs’. This indicates the attention to detail both for the individual and for a particular group, as is evidenced in the discussion in pp. 39 - 193. The

comparison can be made with the overall health check (pp. 39 – 54) within the process of analyses.

### **Analyses**

The scores, from the five-point Likert-type scale, were collapsed into three categories. This allowed the combination of ‘*agree strongly*’ and ‘*agree*’ responses to become one category. In a similar fashion, the ‘*disagree strongly*’ and ‘*disagree*’ responses were combined. Hence this left *not certain* responses as the middle category. On this basis, it was possible to calculate the statistical significance of the differences in responses using the chi-square statistic. These results could then be compared with other studies in the work by Francis Penny, and Baker (2012). The comparison of the responses, from one school to another, is explored in the light of how the ethos of school X has influenced the responses in that school.

One gains a fuller picture of how this material will be used by understanding the dialogical approach that will be used to evaluate two interconnected aspects. The first is the usefulness of the data gathered in providing an insight into the school and its pupils at KS4. The second is the usefulness of the data in giving guidance as to how best the school leadership might engage with these findings. As Francis (2010) has noted central to this is an understanding of the associations established between the ethos and the spiritual health of the school and the respondents. This is what forms the basis of the discussion ahead.

## **Research Positionality**

In considering the research methodology, the positionality of the researcher is important. Both within quantitative and qualitative approaches a spectrum exists involving insider, in-between, or outsider positioning (Yilmaz, 2013 Milligan, 2014). Mercer (2007) recognises that the position of insider research, working critically from within an institution can bring benefits to the research. The insider perspective is also acknowledged to be a proper approach for school leadership to engage with (Coleman, Briggs and Morrison, 2012; Hanson, 2013). The research reported in this dissertation concerning spiritual health within School X reflects the insider positionality of the researcher in the school. As such, it benefits from the use and application of materials and insights available to the insider researcher.

## **Conclusion**

The process and operational approach undertaken inside School X are consistent with the wider, ongoing studies involving the spiritual health questionnaire. The data that were generated were also used as part of the on-going work of self-evaluation within the school. In the following chapters the results of the study are described, taking each domain in turn. This allows for the evidence to illuminate the usefulness of the spiritual health questionnaire in relation to the self-evaluation.

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## **Chapter Six: Dialogue partners for the Spiritual Health Questionnaire**

### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the basis on which this dissertation now proceeds with an unusual format. This involves engaging the results from the spiritual health questionnaire (SHQ) at a particular school, school X, with four key dialogical partners. These four dialogical partners promote discussion with four major sources of information. The four sources of information each provide an insight into the domains of spiritual health that are being considered, and offer useful comparisons for considering practice within the school. While one of these dialogical partners is an internal school document, another comprises minutes from a discussion with the pupil body. The other two are external documents, being the OfSTED report of the relevant period and the judgement of the 'Good School's Guide'.

The first dialogical partner that involves internal debate and judgement is provided by the school's own school evaluation form ('SEF'), in so far as it relates to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The second dialogical partner is the report on the school prepared for OfSTED in 2013. This is the formal evaluation of the school by inspectors, independent of but, reporting to the Department for Education. The report is concerned with the performance of the whole school. The report does draw on empirical data, lesson observation and discussions in school. A key part of these discussions involves those in school leadership as well as the pupils. Schools are encouraged to use a dialogical approach during an inspection and this is the case in the

use of the report (Chapman, 2001; Swaffield, 2004; Plowright, 2007). The usage here evidences good practice. The third dialogical partner is the ‘Good School’s Guide, 2014’; an independent publication that accesses a range of schools, both state and independent. This provides an external view that is neither linked to the school nor to the inspection procedure. Finally, there is another internal document, which considers the discussion by the school council; this allows for a focussed and undiluted voice from the pupils.

The present writer is not aware of any other work that adopts this approach. The intention is to explore the spiritual health of a sample of pupils in School X using this method. The aim is also to trial an unexplored means of investigation. The reason for this is to secure a deeper view of spiritual health within the school than any one perspective might provide. It is also to enable a greater understanding of spiritual health and related issues for those in school leadership. As such this is an empirical investigation that works from the basis of the data gathered by the use of the questionnaire.

### **Overall First Impressions**

The work of Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012) highlights the difference between what seems to be promising on the surface – and what causes concern when one looks below the surface. This is an area of exploration that is a focus for the SHQ, and the extent of its use in schools around the world provides an evidential basis from which to work. This method is key to this research that extends the use of the SHQ within the gifted and

talented setting of school X, and that provides a fuller view of the young people within the institution.

Equally it is also worth noting that the questionnaire is used at a crucial time in the respondents' school career. Each cohort is beginning or involved with two key factors. The first factor involves their adolescence and youth culture. The second is, their journey towards their GCSE courses and exams. In the environment of a boys Grammar school, it is to be expected that the results from the SHQ will highlight a number of the concerns and stresses these pupils faced – and in so doing, will go beneath the surface with this research. In this manner, the research enables a view of the reality of the school ethos beyond the statement of aspiration.

In order to attempt to undertake this exploration the following approach will be adopted, as a dialogical encounter, in order to encourage as full a view as possible. For each of the four domains school X will be considered on four levels. Firstly, the school will be compared with other schools of non-religious foundation within the work of Francis (2005) and Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012). This will map out the terrain. Secondly, there will be a discussion of the collected school X scores over the two years that the spiritual health questionnaire has been undertaken. The purpose of this is to look for areas of strength and weakness, within the school X results. At this point it is also interesting to highlight areas of uncertainty that require further investigation. Thirdly, there will be scrutiny of the spread of results in school X comparing the first 'sitting' of the spiritual health questionnaire in 2012 with that of the second sitting in 2014. Finally, there will be a comparison of the difference and similarity of the results

within the two different year groups. Each of the four sections will contain comment, but there will be a summative statement concluding the exploration of each domain, as a basis for the conclusion. As explained in the next section, in order to add context and a validity to the comparisons and discussions at School X, the present researcher has chosen four dialogue partners. These are detailed and explained so as to allow different parts of the school to speak for themselves. This means that they will form a basis for the findings of the spiritual health questionnaire and allow for an engagement in questioning the precision and validity of the schools' view of matters; as well as providing an insight into the accuracy of the questionnaire.

### **Choosing the dialogue partners**

There has been discussion concerning dialogue in various forms within secondary education (Littleton & Howe, 2010; Staples, Devine, & Chapman, 2010). The desire for a depth of benchmarking necessitates a dialogue is indicated in this literature. In this dissertation, the attempt at depth and dialogue are fostered by discussion with different aspects of the school's self-evaluation, as well as by observations from external sources. As already stated, the present author is unaware of any other study working along these lines in this context.

The ideology behind this is found in the research that encourages learning about, and within a community involving participation (Reynolds, 2000; Howe & Abedin, 2013; Leithwood, Mascal, Strauss, Sacks, Memon, & Yashkina (2007). This is important for interested parties to be involved. This methodology seeks to deliver a process that is

open and experimental in its design. In order to facilitate this, a review of general comments from a range of documents will be followed, prior to the specific exploration of each of the component areas of 'spiritual health. This will involve working from the definition of each domain as found in Francis & Robbins (2005) as well as seeking to relate this to the facets of what ethos can be defined as, highlighted by Bragg and Manchester (2011).

These dialogical areas are:

- a.) What the School's 'SEF' says about SMSC and this area in general. This is an internal document, gathering information within the school, and commented upon by both staff and pupils.
- b.) What the OfSTED report on the school, in 2013, says about the area of Spiritual Health in general.
- c.) What the 'Good Schools Guide' for 2014 says about the area of Spiritual Health in general.
- d.) What the School's Student Council said about the area of Spiritual Health, in 2014.

The aim here is a setting of the scene; of encouraging a dialogue to provide the foundation for the basis of the forthcoming discussions, and to begin to dig beneath the surface of the school's own evaluations. However, it is worth noting, and keeping to the fore, that the first three of these documents did not use the term 'spiritual health' when setting their agenda, but rather were concerned with the whole person, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and development. The final document has a clear focus on aspects of spiritual health.

It is worth stating at this juncture that there is an overlap on two levels with the ensuing dialogue. The overlap occurs firstly because of the manner in which schools are asked to evidence such matters relating to spiritual health. Secondly, this evidential body can relate to more than one aspect of spiritual health, and this means that there will be a degree of repetition, and that this is, while unavoidable, still useful.

In order to gain an understanding of the relevance of this approach, and its usefulness in a dialogue that seeks to look beneath the surface, it is necessary to explain the four documents within this context in some detail. It is the conviction of the current researcher that the above discussion suggests the reasons for using the spiritual health questionnaire as a means of looking at the wellbeing of pupils within a school. This approach allows for a gathering of data that can usefully be discussed in order to form a basic understanding of a school – and to suggest ways to further develop its provision.

This methodology is positive in that it also allows for a considered and careful approach about how best to develop the wellbeing, the spiritual health of the individuals and the community, for their own sakes. Where this approach may suffer is that the focus of OfSTED does not directly reflect the precision of that of spiritual health. OfSTED accepts the evidence of questionnaires undertaken by the students, but their investigation goes beyond such material. This might be seen as a weakness in the method the present researcher is adopting, not least in meaning there will be repetition between details in order to review the results from the spiritual health questionnaire. This may be a weakness, but equally, this does allow for a useful comparison between the two approaches, which is at the heart of this research.

**Introducing the SEF (School evaluation form) in relation to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC), covering the period of the research**

OfSTED (2012b, 2016) makes clear in Part 2 that self-evaluation is an essential aspect of assessing and leading a school. The teaching unions accept this (Thornley, 2012).

Each school may adopt its own approach. In the case of School X, The School Evaluation Form (SPWC - SchX, 2013) is a requirement placed on all State schools to enable stock-taking and planning from the present, with a view to the future. There are certain aspects that are mandatory, such as finance, but in other areas it is for the individual school to fashion its own approach to this document. Plowright (2007) argues for an integrated approach and this is what School X's SEF sought. In this context the school's SEF contains a report on SMSC during the period in which the spiritual health questionnaire was being operationalised. This is in keeping with a view of involving a number of voices in an evaluative process (Schildkamp, Visscher, & Luyten, 2009).

At school X, an internal staff committee, called the Staff Pupil Welfare Committee (SPWC), undertook the responsibility to discuss, evaluate and evidence the statutory area of 'Behaviour and Attendance', but also to extend this with a review of the school's delivery of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. As already stated, SMSC is not the same as 'spiritual health', but this document is nevertheless useful in allowing a comparison and dialogue with the returns from the spiritual health questionnaire. The document that was developed was the design of the present researcher and is based on the approach adopted by the school in relation to the work of Thornley (2012) and was for internal use. Thornley's work developed a systemic

approach that gave schools a tool for reviewing their progress in terms of the OfSTED model (2012b, 2016). This approach was advocated by the Association of School and College Leaders (Thornley, 2012.)

The use of this document was an important part of an internal assessment of SMSC in the school. Following on from the OfSTED guidelines, and Thornley's (2012) investigative format, within school X the investigation and assessment of SMSC involved forming judgements in five particular, but inter-related, areas. (The five areas are different from the domains within the Spiritual health framework, but there is a great deal of overlap. The best way of operating with the two systems of judgement, in this instance, was to allow for the SHQ to bring a precision of judgment to the process. It is the use of the questionnaire, and the growing body of national data that makes this possible.) These were:

- i. Personal insight and spiritual development;  
(to engage in what they believe and hold most deeply, and to express this in dialogue with others.)
- ii. Moral understanding and relationships;  
(to be able to make reasoned and responsible responses to moral dilemmas.)
- iii. Social development and skills;  
(this should be evident in a pragmatic manner, such as pupils showing that they were able to resolve conflicts intelligently and seek consensus, while showing a respect others' needs and interests.)
- iv. Understanding and respect for different cultures;

- (that the school's promotion of SMSC and community cohesion should encourage pupils to have very good insight into their own and others' cultures, from first-hand experience. This would be seen in their ability to appreciate cultural diversity and challenge racism and other forms of prejudice.)
- v. The school's ongoing and consistent promotion of SMSC and community cohesion; (that SMSC development underpins all the school's curriculum and teaching).

This impact should be evident in all classrooms and nearly all students' attitudes.

(Thornley, 2012)

In each area, a judgement was called for involving the nature of the provision as 'Outstanding' (1), 'Good' (2), 'Satisfactory' (3) or 'Inadequate' (4) provision. This was in keeping with the OfSTED judgements for that period. The document that was produced formed the opinion that the School could assess itself as outstanding in each of the five areas. OfSTED requires such judgements to be realistic and to be defensible – and it is important to note that during the inspection of 2013, these judgements were upheld by the inspectors.

The staff pupil welfare committee that worked on this investigation consisted of the Heads of House – Day (four), and Boarding (two), and the Heads of Sixth form (two). The group met for an hour on a weekly basis, for a period of half a term. The document produced was then shared with staff in each of the Houses, allowing for comment and revision. At the same time, each academic department was asked to review its involvement with the SMSC agenda, and this was tabulated and shared at the relevant

meetings. Following this, an edited version was shared with the School Council, for discussion and revision. The next stage was for this to go to the School's Senior Leadership Team, (SLT), and then onto the governors' pupil welfare committee. The results of this process were used to inform the development program for staff and to look at the structures of the school from the perspective of the pupils. This level of scrutiny and debate shows something of the importance of SMSC within the school, as an important component for evaluating and reviewing the development of the whole person.

Finally, and usefully, the school evaluation form contains a section that highlights what the school needed to address imminently in order to improve. It is worthwhile bearing this in mind at this point in the investigation. In dealing with an awareness that bullying, sexism, racism and homophobia did exist within the school, there was a sense that educating an individual involved dealing with the frailty of the human condition, in the light of a holistic awareness of the individual, by the individual, within the community. This relates to each of the four domains. At this point the SEF suggests a greater use of the concept of spiritual health to deliver a precision not yet evidenced, not least because of giving a greater voice to the pupils.

## **The use of comments from the report of the OfSTED inspection of School X in 2013**

All state schools are subject to inspections by OfSTED, and the report from 2013, (School X/ OFSTED 2013) provides a useful external view of School X. The school was judged to be ‘Outstanding’, being praised for:

The excellent educational opportunities, in particular the extensive range of extra-curricular activities, develop in students a wide range of personal skills and attributes that equip them exceedingly well for the next stage of their education and the world beyond school. (School X/ OFSTED, 2013, p. 1.)

For the sake of this research and discussion, it is important to observe that it is very rare that OfSTED give an outstanding judgement for the area of ‘Behaviour & Safety’, which was the case with this inspection. The reason for highlighting this fact is because this is the area of judgement that best (but not exclusively) relates to the domains of spiritual health. To reach such a judgement, the views of pupils, parents and staff are collected. Again, for the purpose of this research, this sets the scene by noting that this investigation takes place in a school seen to be successfully meeting the needs of its community.

This can be seen in the (more focussed) setting of the judgement concerning the pupils’ relationship to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC):

Students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well through both the formal and informal curriculum; not only are students given excellent opportunities to be involved in a wide range of different sporting and cultural activities (and the involvement by students in these areas is promoted successfully by the house system) but it is developed throughout school life.

House competitions encourage student participation and excellence in both sporting and artistic endeavours. The quality of relationships between staff and students is supported effectively through this and senior leaders are highly committed to this important aspect of students' education. (School X/ OFSTED 2013, p. 6.)

While such comments do not relate particularly to spiritual health, it does suggest that these are the attributes of a school in which one could expect to find a positive return from the use of the SHQ.

At the time of this inspection (2013) a key component of what was undertaken, involved forming a judgement in relation to the school's proper delivery of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, as seen above. It would be a fallacy to assume that this part of the investigation alone deals with 'Spiritual Health'. Equally using the judgement with regard to SMSC is a useful starting point when working with the OfSTED document. However, to simply remain within one particular judgement would be to narrow any view arrived at in relation to the use of the spiritual health questionnaire. The reason for this is that it would restrict the ability of the researcher to use the questionnaire as a tool to look below the surface.

Almost as a footnote, the school highlights the view of the parents in this area (Sch. X/SEF, 2013). The reason for this is in order to allow a full view of the nature of the school and its community. Before the OfSTED there were only six comments on Government's official 'Parent View' website (Parent view, 2013). This was too few to qualify for consideration by the inspectors, since there needs to be a minimum of eight returns. The school sent a letter out to parents it went up to over 140 in 24 hours. This

response was seen as extremely significant and very impressive, as were the comments by those who replied.

### **The use of ‘The Good Schools Guide, 2014’**

The ‘Good Schools Guide’ (Hilpern, 2014) chooses which schools to visit, and it relates to those institutions within the ‘Public’ domain of education, and to some State schools as well. The comments that follow, are highlighted as being those that the present researcher sees as being evidence of spiritual health, in that if there was not some modicum of this, then such judgements could not be arrived at.

With this in mind, the judgement was that school X was

a mature, excellent school ... something very special for the pupils who attend... with the strong academic results that one would expect in a selective school boosted by girls coming into the Sixth form. (Hilpern, 2014)

While the Sixth form is a Key Stage beyond the location of this research, this comment still helps define the ethos of the institution. Across the year groups there was testimony from students to there being a supportive environment, both pastorally and academically.

In the section of the report on ‘Background and atmosphere’ three areas are highlighted. These were, firstly, the ‘House system’ that created a belonging within the school of ‘energy and vitality’. Further to this there was a commitment to ‘celebrating diversity’, which is reflected in the fact that:

Students spoke easily about such matters as respect, community and equality, and see a major strength of the school as encouraging everyone to be themselves. (Hilpern, 2014)

At this point the School's systems are praised for encouraging mentoring and peer support. This praise is linked to the third area in relation to the general comments contained within this report. The report found evidence that within the school there was an informality about the relationships and a sense of mutual respect.

This informality was clear with an accepted sense of propriety within the school. This correlates with observations in the section relating to 'Pastoral care and discipline' which highlights that staff are aware of individual needs, and that students look after one another. In the section on 'Pupils and Parents', both the groups are quoted as being aware of, and benefitting from, the 'nurturing' within the School, combining both support and discipline.

In relation to the comments at the start of this section, it would appear, that in this report one finds evidence that would suggest that the school is spiritually healthy. The extent to which this is true is difficult to judge from this document but does offer a degree of external insight.

### **The School Council's discussion of Spiritual Health at School X, 2013**

It is important that, as well as questioning pupils using the spiritual health questionnaire, they are allowed to comment on their views of spiritual health within a

school (Fisher, 2006a, 2009). In this pursuit, seeking to understand the pupils' experience by using their language and judgements, there is an engagement with the fusion of the quantitative and qualitative as proposed by Wren (2011) and Gockel (2013). This approach to seeking indicators of ethos and wellbeing within the pupil voice is not always welcomed and Lodge (2005) discusses how it can be considered problematic. Myers and Ruddock (2004) put the discussion in context:

Until fairly recently, pupils were rarely invited to bring their perspectives on teaching and learning into the development frame. Evidence has been drawn from observational studies, ethnographies, experiments and action research interventions but the researchers' perspectives have defined the boundaries of what counts as evidence. Too often ... research has concentrated on looking in from the outside and has not focused on participants' conceptions of teaching and learning; yet it is these conceptions that form the 'realities' of pupils' and teachers' working lives and understanding these realities is essential to our objective of making teaching and learning more effective. (Myers & Ruddock, 2004, p. 2)

This view of consultation and dialogue is in keeping with the aims and operation of Fisher (2006, 2009a) and with Francis and Robbins (2005) and Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) in that it allows for the clarity of the student voice. Such an approach also engages with the ideas of Benson, Roehlkepartain, and Hong (2008) in accessing the need to understand spiritual development among young people. Greer (2006) provides a useful example of this in an investigation of the attitudes and thinking concerning religion in the context of Belfast.

The voice that emerges from this source, and its engagement with the topic is interesting in that it is largely positive. Both Fisher (2006) and Grove (2010) consider the importance of three aspects in such an undertaking. These evidence strong relationships, of a degree of mutual respect within a community and a sharing of commendations and concerns that indicate a sense of responsibility. This is by the choice of those pupils involved in this discussion, and as such makes for an interesting example of the adolescent voice and of the sharing of the three areas mentioned above.

It is always possible to question the make-up of a pupil body and there is a validity in doing so. However, the Student Council is in itself a useful benchmark (Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012). In this instance, the council itself felt that it adequately represented the student voice. This might be a voice from the margins, but it is at least an attempt to be so. In this way, it allows for a useful comparison with the results from the spiritual health questionnaire. Hence in order to grasp the significance of this contribution, and to balance this with an awareness of the limitations, it is important to understand two aspects. The first is that of the makeup and role of the School Council; with the second being the nature of how this information was gathered.

The School Council is a representative body of pupils within the school. It is organised and run by senior pupils, who are able to take reports of their discussions to senior staff. They are also able to request that members of the school's senior leadership team attend a meeting once a year, in order to discuss a matter by prior agreement. Those who attend are elected by their peers from each House and form. The weighting of representation is greater in the senior years as more pupils are in these year groups. The

Council is chaired by two senior pupils (and overseen by a member of staff – in a passive role, not always being in attendance).

On the day in question the Council comprised 30 pupils (from a pupil body of 800). Each of the Key Stages were represented, but KS5 were the most numerous group. Despite this weighting, the pupils from KS 3 and 4 did not feel disadvantaged and felt that they had a voice. Of the pupils attending, six of them had joined the school in the Sixth form and two had joined in Y9.

In terms of the connection between this group and the SHQ, there was a spread. Some of the pupils in Y12 had undertaken the questionnaire in their previous Key Stage, while for those in Key Stage 4 there was the recent experience of undertaking the questionnaire. The nature of the SHQ was explained to the younger pupils, but it was possible to engage in the debate without necessarily have (yet) taken the questionnaire.

This links to the second issue involved in this particular introduction – that of the nature of the discussion at this meeting. The present researcher attended the Council with prior agreement to discuss the domains of spiritual health. (At the time of this visit the researcher held the post of Deputy Head – Pupil Welfare, at the school. This involved a responsibility for matters of the personal and academic development for all pupils within the school.) The pupils were clear that the meeting was fulfilling a dual purpose, both adding to the school's understanding of the pupil experience, as well as helping with a piece of academic research.

While being fully aware of the material gathered elsewhere, such as the OfSTED report, in order to enable this discussion, the agenda and discussion moved away from the DfE/ OfSTED criteria for SMSC and used instead the concept of spiritual health (Francis & Robbins 2005; Francis, 2010). The reason for this was the judgement that this approach allowed for a clear understanding of these issues within the school, while also testing the efficacy of the domains involved. In such a context, the focuses on four domains is to observe the praxis of these areas rather than just the definition of them. The discussion was also facilitated so as to allow for some awareness of what ‘artefacts’ the School Council saw as important (Schein, 1985, 1999, 2004, 2010). This method sought a fusion of ideas to give greater clarity to the situation of spiritual health as perceived by the students. As such, it sought to enhance the dialogue and the judgement involved, by looking for the aspects of school life that showed where there was evidence for the four domains enshrined in the school’s systems.

For the purpose of these discussions, the Council were split into five groups, with a mixed representation from the different Key Stages. There was a question on each of the four domains and one more general question. Finally, after each group had reported back, there was a general discussion relating to what aspects of school life external observers should look at in order to gain an understanding of SMCS development at School X. Minutes were taken of the Council’s discussions (Warren-Smith, 2013), and agreed between the joint Chairs of the meeting and the researcher prior to their consideration in this context.

Unusually, it is worthwhile at this stage to highlight what the present researcher considered to be the main points that relate to the domains of spiritual health. These were that the pupils involved were clearly aware of issues relating to SMSC, and to spiritual health. They valued, and clearly desired, a pragmatic approach in the spirit of critical openness for individuals and groups within the school. The basis for this appears to be exhibited in a strong sense of belonging – regardless of the Year in which they joined the school. This suggests a positive body of debate to place within the context of this dialogue.

## **Conclusion**

In order to explore this method of investigation, the following chapters will adopt a rigorous approach in attempting to explain the systems involved with each of the dialogue partners. While the qualitative forms the basis for the explorations, there will also be a recourse to quantitative evidence. The purpose for this method lies in the desire for clarity. This narrative will detail both debate and good practice. In so doing the intention is to provide a holistic perspective of what is involved.

Each of the following four chapters has been designed to follow the same format. They have been designed to enable the reader to select and to read these chapters in any order, depending on the individual reader's main area of interest (personal, communal, environmental and transcendental). Inevitably this means a necessary repetition of material to introduce each chapter.

Equally the professional engagement involved in this discussion requires finding a voice in the debate that draws both on the academic research and on the requirements of educational bodies such as OfSTED. In this pursuit a form of report is adopted as a presentation of ideas and data (Hyland, 2009; Turner, Shahabuddin, & Reid, 2009; Mligo, 2016). This endeavour utilises a format that allows for a report to justify the usefulness and accuracy of the spiritual health questionnaire and to justify its use and attention by school leadership teams. This engagement is less discursive than might otherwise be the case, but it allows for the 'mixed lens' (Chase, 2007) of the quantitative and qualitative to be fused and to engage in dialogue (Brannon, 2005; de Souza, 2009b).

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## Chapter 7: Exploring the Personal Domain

### Introduction

In the context of the personal domain, a key component of this dissertation is a consideration of the application of the spiritual health questionnaire to a sample of pupils who are gifted and talented. Within the aim of this dissertation is a consideration of how effectively the spiritual health questionnaire is able to view the personal wellbeing of a particular sample. The reason for this being to see what use such an investigation might be for the strategic leadership of a school.

The personal domain involves the area that West-Burnham and Jones (2008) see as being ‘a sense of self’. This provides a challenge in that it involves:

one of the most important factors in spiritual development ... the creation in each person of an understanding of their uniqueness, dignity and value as a person. this is ... fundamental to any notion of an educated person. There is ... a fine balance between supporting the growth of a valid sense of self and responding to modern pressures of egocentricity and individualism. Equally there is a delicate relationship between personal autonomy and integrity, and the demands and expectations of others. This is a continual struggle between respecting difference, valuing uniqueness and the expectations of others.  
(West-Burnham & Jones, 2008, p. 73.)

In this pursuit there is an awareness of what Tirri and Kuusisto (2013) view as the tendency among the gifted and talented to be individualistic, placing a high value on freedom of choice. It is the quantitative basis of the spiritual health questionnaire that

allows for this tendency to be explored (de Souza, 2009a) and accessed, both for the individual and the collective as a learning organisation.

### **The aim of the chapter**

This chapter's aim is to interact with the previous research (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012) where the spiritual health questionnaire has been operationalised in a less educationally selective setting than that of school X. These previous investigations cover a more comprehensive intake. The difference in this comparison is that in this study the focus is the top fifteen percent of the academic range, the 'gifted and talented'. Such pupils exhibit particular tendencies (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013) and if the school does not foster an understanding of such tendencies, it runs the risk of harming those within their systems. In this setting the ethos and the curriculum of a school, catering to the needs of such pupils will have an effect on stakeholders. There is also evidence that a breadth of approach provides a fuller picture (Francis & Robbins, 2005; de Souza, 2014).

It is important to understand how the concept of ethos is applied in this setting. The work of both Fisher in chapter two, and Francis in chapter three, relies on a quantitative operation. This provides an essential basis for school leaders to consider the effectiveness of their systems. However, OfSTED requires a fusion of both quantitative and qualitative material to form the basis for the decision-making process during inspection. Equally it is expected that a school will be able to exhibit an understanding of the practices and views within it that are based on both research strands. It is the

view of the present researcher that such an undertaking requires an investigation using ‘multiple lens’ in order to hear the voices of number and word (Chase, 2007). De Souza (2009b) speaks of such an undertaking as an exploration and this is a useful motif for what follows. The approach adopted in this work will be the dialogical interaction, involving the qualitative and quantitative interacting with narrative, as explained previous chapters.

### **The methodology applied in the chapter**

The method adopted in this chapter and the following three chapters is chosen in order to explore both the quantitative and the qualitative (Brannon, 2005, Hyland, 2009). However, the base for this exploration is the quantitative. This adopts a ‘mixed methods’ approach to the research and the discussion, as suggested by Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007), Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), and Creswell and Creswell (2017). This involves the ‘multiple lens’ referred to above in order to consider both individual experience and institutional experience. Such ideas are explored by Zeeman, Poggenpoel, Myburgh, and Van Der Linde (2002), Packwood and Sikes (2006); Chase (2007); Heikkinen, Huttunen, and Syrjälä (2007), Wren (2011), and Gockel (2012). Much of this research originates within the qualitative setting, and within psychological approaches to research in education, but it does involve and enhance the quantitative. As such, the quantitative basis involves an investigation of the data generated by the questionnaire (Francis, 2010; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). The qualitative engages in conversation with the dialogical partners and involves a use of narrative in the form of report and discussion (Benefiel, 2003, 2005; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006).

Here the narrative of the school's involvement in this area, as well as the empirical evidence from the questionnaire, provide an important insight beneath the surface of the life of the school. The narrative approach adopted here requires a discussion of the data generated in the quantitative context by the spiritual health questionnaire. It does so in relation to two areas. The first approach is that of the data in comparison with similar data from other research (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012). The second looks at the data generated in the context of the school, engaging with the four dialogical partners mentioned in chapter six. In both cases, there is an awareness of the usefulness of this to school leadership. The usefulness is secured in the ability of this fusion of research styles to provide evidence of the indicators highlighted by Bragg and Manchester (2011) when considering ethos and wellbeing.

### **The use of narrative in the chapter**

The narrative approach as applied to quantitative research uses the link between words and number in order to give a comprehensive view of the data (Franzosi, 2009). The qualitative research is in keeping with that found in education research (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2017) and in relation to that used in exploring broader issues with multiple lens (Chase, 2007; Lewis, 2007). Such discussion involves the aspect of writing involving the use of the structure of a report. This allows for a discussion of the picture that emerges within the dynamic between the quantitative and the narrative. In Elliott (2005) there is a practical discussion of combining the use of the quantitative and the qualitative. In Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) there is an example of combined operationalism. It is this combination that the next four chapters will follow. The

present researcher is aware that the use of narrative as a means of report and comment is more easily accommodated with the qualitative tradition, but given the examples above, does have confidence in its usefulness in this setting. This is in keeping with the OfSTED inspection questioning and the indicators provided by Bragg and Manchester (2011).

### **The procedure of the chapter**

The chapter will involve the following procedure. There will be a threefold approach to considering the personal domain within School X. Firstly, this will involve a consideration of what indicators there might be to provide an insight into the concept of ethos. The second aspect of the exploration will be to see what information and judgement can be gained from an involvement with the four dialogical partners. The third area will be to consider School X's data from the questionnaire. This will involve considering the operation of the data in different settings. Finally, these three areas will lead to a summary. This summary will contrast the qualitative views of the dialogical partners with that of the quantitative data. The quantitative will be used to hold the qualitative to account.

### **The application of the concept of 'ethos' to the personal domain in the context of this research**

Bearing in mind the earlier discussion concerning ethos in chapter four and the relation of ethos to the personal domain, the following Table 7:1 outlines possible indicators to inform this debate. The aim of such an approach is to help focus the investigation

within each domain, and in so doing to give credence to the issues relating to the overlap within the body of evidence. This seriously considers the areas defining ethos highlighted by Bragg and Manchester (2011). However, this approach uses the concept and domains of the concept of spiritual health (Francis & Robbins, 2005) as the guiding force. Table 7: 1 gives an insight to this approach.

Table 7:1 - To show the relation between the personal domain (Francis & Robbins, 2005) with Bragg and Manchester's (2011). approach to ethos and wellbeing by the use of indicators.	
Personal Domain of Spiritual Health (Francis & Robbins, 2005)	Discussion with the concept of 'Ethos' – 'indicators' of debate, relating to Bragg and Manchester (2011, pp. 1&2) – <i>referred to in italics.</i>
<p>“Young people who enjoy a good level of spiritual health within the personal domain are likely to have made good sense of their time at school and to feel affirmed by the experience.” (Francis &amp; Robbins, 2005, p. 41)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the values of the school encourage happiness? <i>(Values and Vision)</i></li> <li>• Does both the official and unofficial structure of the school enhance belonging? <i>(Official and unofficial views of school)</i></li> <li>• Does the school encourage and work to value positive relationships? <i>(Relationships and interactions)</i></li> <li>• Does the 'feel' of the school enhance a pupil's self-worth? <i>(That which is evident but not easily articulated)</i></li> <li>• Is the issue of contentment exhibited in the material and social aspects of the ethos? <i>(Expression of the material and social facets of ethos)</i></li> <li>• Do the systems of negotiation allow for the expression of a sense of purpose? <i>(Systems of negotiation or imposition)</i></li> <li>• Do the systems encouraging and monitoring learning have a positive effect? <i>(Effectiveness and learning)</i></li> </ul>

The aim here is to gather information that is exhibited at the surface level, but that also operates from a less official, or more subterranean experience. As such, this touches on Bragg and Manchester's (2011) understanding of official and unofficial views of school. The intention is to get to the heart of whether or not pupils can be said to enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the personal domain. For this exploration to have a real validity it is important that the question relating to the 'indicators' base answers on quantitative data. This involves the definition of the personal domain interacting with the indicators of ethos in a pragmatic fashion. Each table indicates where the quantitative and the qualitative merge in this respect. Table 7: 1 relates the definitions of the domain to the indicators defined by Bragg and Manchester, providing an example of this engagement. This comparison deals with issues relating to personal values within and beyond the learning environment. In this respect, the pupil's sense of self-worth and self-esteem should be evidenced, positively or otherwise, in the questions relating to happiness, a sense of purpose and the like, in their experience of school. The question for the leadership of a school is how best to work with the data from the spiritual health questionnaire in order to enhance learning by securing this area (Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, & Thomas, 2007).

### **The dialogical consideration of the personal domain**

In this pursuit, the dialogue between the four documents already mentioned, now begins. This involves the results from the spiritual health questionnaire and aspects of the school's evaluation.

**The first dialogical partner: What the School's 'SEF' (School Evaluation form) says about 'SMSC' (Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) and the Personal domain**

The 'SEF' (School evaluation form) about spiritual, moral, social and health education, gather mainly qualitative material, but does make use of quantitative material. In this document there are areas of overlap and difference with the concept of 'spiritual health' as used in the questionnaire. In order to consider fully this evaluation there is a need to work systematically through the SEF's areas relating to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural in each domain. It is necessary to remember, in the dialogue that follows from this evaluation, that the School felt its delivery within the personal dimension should be set in the context of the SEF's 'Outstanding' judgement. Of equal importance is an awareness of whether or not, even allowing for this 'Outstanding' judgement, the school can exhibit 'indicators' that show how it realises values that encourage happiness, enhance belonging and foster positive relationships.

An important question arises as to whether or not the school's systems allow a negotiation between the pupils and the wider community in such a manner that has a positive effect (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). Where there is this dialogue it allows a view of 'both official and the unofficial' aspects of ethos (Bragg & Manchester, 2011). What one finds in such documents as the SEF is an honest investigation by the school's leadership to judge the area. It is for OfSTED to form a view of the accuracy of this, and for the SHQ to provide a basis for the scrutiny of both.

Beginning with a view of the ‘spiritual’, the above approach is enhanced given the link within the OfSTED framework, between personal insight and spiritual development.

This is expressed in the comment in this area of the SEF that, within a school with a strong multicultural community:

A significant openness exists in pupils’ dialogue with each other, and with teachers, including the Head and Governors. Discussion in class, contribution to assemblies, engagement in debating, giving to charities, involvement in creative writing, joining in group activities e.g. sport, music, drama, dance, CCF, but also pursuing individual beliefs, all define our boys and girls.

(School X/ SMSC/ SEF, 2013, p. 5)

The discussion of morality within the school deals more, in the context of this domain, with the general praxis of the whole school, rather than individual. This is because of the nature of the SEF as setting a context in which the community allows the individual to thrive. An example of this is seen in the statement that, when there is an unkindness from one pupil to another, this is frequently brought to the attention of staff by pupils. This is however, a judgement by the staff and it remains to be seen whether or not the questionnaire bears this out.

Similar issues arise when one considers the area of social development in relation to the personal domain; here a judgement involves an understanding of the need to value the skills and interests of others as essential to the community’s wellbeing. Such a valuing should enhance feelings of personal worth – and as such this is a useful area of investigation in relation to the results of the spiritual health questionnaire.

The SEF does sound a word of caution, highlighting a weakness of the school's culture, when it states that an awareness that by building a close, co-operative community there can be an insularity. This requires a frequent challenge to a possible 'natural parochiality'. However, this does not diminish the overall judgement. In terms of the cultural dimension, one can see how the well-being of an individual would be enhanced in a community that values diversity. The SEF pointed to the opportunity of individuals from a range of religious, class and cultural backgrounds, to achieve within the systems of the school. One would hope that this would be evidenced in a sense of happiness exhibited in the SHQ returns. Within this, there is also a consciousness of the occasional use of racist or homophobic language, and this is likely to be a cause of unhappiness.

The comments from this discussion promise a positive return from the questionnaire. While this is positive, it must be noted that there are also pointers that suggest that the researcher should look for a sense of disenfranchisement among a minority of the pupils. This requires a contextual sifting of material in order to comment on the views of vision and values, and of the official and unofficial views of the school (Bragg & Manchester, 2011). The initial findings are positive.

### **The second dialogical partner: What the OfSTED report on the school, in 2013, says about the Personal domain**

For a school, such as School X, to receive an 'Outstanding' judgment from OfSTED requires a consistency across a number of related areas. This judgement would require a

significant amount of evidence in all the areas outlined by Bragg and Manchester (2011).

In the final OfSTED report there may not, as in this dissertation, be a comment on whether or not pupils exhibit a sense of purpose, but there should be a judgement that suggests this in the final statement. In this broader context, the following comment from the OfSTED report (2013) for School X, is important because it highlights the positive ethos of the school. It observes that:

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well through both the formal and informal curriculum; not only are students given excellent opportunities to be involved in a wide range of different sporting and cultural activities (and the involvement by students in these areas is promoted successfully by the house system) but it is developed throughout school life. House competitions encourage student participation and excellence in both sporting and artistic endeavours. The quality of relationships between staff and students is supported effectively through this and senior leaders are highly committed to this important aspect of students' education. (School X/ OFSTED, 2013, p.6)

This judgement does not directly address the issue of a sense of purpose. However, contextually, it is not unreasonable to consider that such an ethos encourages pupils in a holistic sense.

The above would suggest that the positive aspects of the four domains of spiritual health (Fisher, 1998; Francis & Robbins, 2005) are present to a degree and that pupils may avail themselves of the opportunities this presents. Yet, even allowing for the

support offered by staff and other students, there is no mention here of what help is on hand for the individual who feels that they lack a sense of purpose and have a low view of their being. This is particularly notable when looking at the question that asks whether or not a pupil has ever considered taking their own life.

At this stage, it is enough to consider the OfSTED report to show a positive view of the ethos of the school. It is also important to notice that there are still deeper issues that will require further investigation within this work.

### **The third dialogical partner: What the ‘Good Schools Guide’ for 2014 says about the personal domain**

Further to the more general comments already noted, it is possible to build on these observations. It is important to recognise that this dialogical partner is not one from an academic background, but rather one involved in information about schooling. In this case, the comments or narrative are intended to be conversational. There is much here in this report that could also be used to inform the other domains, particularly the communal. Central to the personal domain is the belonging created by the House system. This facilitates an essential element in relating to matters of happiness, of self-worth, of positive relationships and of finding a sense of purpose. Such issues are key to pupils finding that they are being encouraged by the School’s systems, and within them.

The sense of personal belonging is seen not purely in the academic success. This educational principle is well established (Jimerson, Pletcher, Graydon, Schnurr, Nickerson, & Kundert, 2006.) In the case of School X, this is already alluded to but extends to Sport and to the inherent competition between Houses. For example:

students say they love their sport whatever the weather. House sports competitions include the cross-country ... to get even the less athletically inclined involved, and the emphasis is on inclusion, not solely on the gifted few. But those with expertise are encouraged to play at regional and national level as well. (Hilpern, 2014.)

The belief that sport can be used to enhance academic success is much debated (Watson & Collis, 1982). Anderman (2010) argues for that which creates belonging, enhances academic success. As discussed earlier, these comments on the school's sporting dimensions have relevance for the communal domain as well as highlighting an ethos in which the personal domain can be evidenced. This belonging extends opportunities to take part in the performing arts, and their being 'sensational artwork' on display around the school, some of which belonged to those pupils involved in taking the questionnaire. This is evidence of the ethos that Bragg and Manchester (2011) seek in the 'feel' and the effectiveness of a school.

While the above is positive, this report does contain one sentence that is a concern. It is noted, when discussing the background and atmosphere of the school, the observation is that the occasional child who doesn't flourish, probably doesn't talk to staff or take the opportunities offered. This statement reflects the need to go beneath the surface, requiring why, in a school that espouses good pastoral care and a nurturing environment, some may not flourish. Such concerns relate to the areas highlighted by

Bragg and Manchester (2011) in relation to the official and unofficial views of a school. This is an important aspect to look for in the returns from the spiritual health questionnaire.

#### **The fourth dialogical partner: What the School's Student Council said about the Personal Domain in 2014**

The discussion of this domain began with a question relating to what extent the school allowed pupils to be themselves. Pupils were aware of the questions that the spiritual health questionnaire posed in this domain and choose to express their thoughts in terms of what they thought was positive and negative about the personal domain within the school's systems. The positive comments gathered around the safety that the House system enabled, and a general freedom to follow one's interests. Bragg and Manchester (2011) see such interaction as evidence of positive relationships and of a use of established systems of negotiation.

This latter point, in terms of choice and negotiation, include the choice of academic paths open to pupils. In this area the tendencies highlighted by Tirri and Kuusisto (2013) are evidenced. The aspect of the school system seen to be less positive included 'petty rules' relating to such matters as hair styles, but also to a perception of a limited range of subjects, most particularly the need for more emphasis on Arts and Music. There was discussion in respect to the (seeming) tension between the (positive) choice of academic paths, and the limitations placed on pupils' choice of subjects. It was

(generally) agreed that matters improved as pupils progressed up the school, and that the leadership of the school were working to improve the breadth of subjects.

It was also agreed that the belonging created within the House system allowed for a general sense of purpose and worth, as well as providing some support in related matters. There was a request for the School to look for further methods of enhancing such support. In the debate about such matters there is evidence that the praxis of the systems allows for this domain to be secure, but not beyond further discussion.

## **The Spiritual Health Questionnaire returns for the personal domain**

### **Introduction**

After the outline above considering the four dialogical partners, it is now necessary to view the material from the use of the spiritual health questionnaire, both within the school and in more general settings. The further 'settings' being the 'Overall Health Check' (Francis & Robbins, 2005) and the work undertaken involving schools without a religious character by Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012). Following this comparison there is a consideration of three other aspects of data. These are a view of the overall return from School X for both cohorts, 2012 and 2014; an assessment of the data from 2012 and 2014; and finally, a look at the data generated by the Year groups combining both cohorts. This allows for a depth of exploration.

### **The study at school X and other studies**

There is an interesting comparison between the results from the spiritual health questionnaire used over the years. Table 7: 2 shows the comparison between studies published in 2005, 2012 and the results from School X. It is noticeable in this comparison that School X scores 'well' and that this is the starting point for discussion in this area of the personal domain.

Superficially the results suggest that School X can be confident that the data concerning the personal domain are positive, reflecting an affirming and proactive ethos. The positive results are significantly higher than the other surveys. This is seen in the sense of purpose, worth and influence touched on by the first three questions. In the case of questioning a sense of worth, the School X results were between 7 – 16% higher than in the other two surveys.

On the question of a life worth living the gap was at least 15%, and the sense of personal worth between 5 – 11 % more positive. There was correlation between these questions and those considering depression and suicidal thoughts. While there is a noticeable difference between the return for 2005, where 52% often felt depressed, the returns for the other two cohorts undertaking the SHQ were far more positive with 23-30% answering 'Yes' to the question. In a similar fashion, the 'Yes' return for the question on suicidal thoughts, fell positively from 27% to between 18 – 12%. In these cases, the most positive results belonged to the School X return. While this is encouraging, it still leaves 12% considering taking their own life, and 8% uncertain

where they stood on this. In this case the results, while positive, do indicate an area of concern and one which a school should address.

It would appear that the majority of young people are happy at school, with figures between 71 – 84%. This is encouraging since it suggests the foundation for a positive ethos within schools that can be used to deal with the issues raise above. This is particularly true of School X where only 7% voiced unhappiness with their schooling and 9% were unsure. One would expect to see this reflected in the earlier questions – and this is the case.

Given the positive nature of these results it is necessary to dig deeper into the data. This aspect of exploration is based primarily on quantitative data and will involve a consideration of the overall data from School X.

Table 7:2 – To show results of the use of the SHQ in three settings, allowing comparison with the personal domain.

Statement	'Overall health Check' (Francis & Robbins, 2005)			'Schools without a religious character' (Francis, Penny & Baker, 2012)			School X: 'Gifted and Talented cohort' School X: 2012-14		
	Yes %	Don't know %	No %	Yes %	Don't know %	No %	Yes %	Don't know %	No %
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	56	34	10	65	27	8	72	19	9
I find life really worth living	70	21	9	71	19	10	86	10	4
I feel that I am not much worth as a person	13	22	65	16	25	59	14	16	70
I often feel depressed	52	19	29	30	21	49	23	18	59
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	27	15	58	18	12	70	12	8	80
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	35	26	39	33	29	38	30	21	49
I am happy in my school	71	17	12	71	17	12	84	9	7

### **The overall School X return, 2012 – 2014**

There is a requirement to understand the data generated within School X. In this instance the exploration looks at the combined results concerning the personal domain across Years 9 and 10 in the school over the years that the questionnaire was taken.

The tables (7: 3 - 5) reveal a number of positives, many commented already mentioned indicating a happy school. Table 7: 3 evidences a cultural ethos within which young people are nurtured, having a sense of purpose and worth. Even among the 29% of those pupils who were less certain about their sense of purpose, a number still felt that life was worth living. In this case only 14% answered negatively in this respect. In a similar manner, 16% expressed some unhappiness about being at school, leaving some pupils unhappy at school but feeling positively about their lives in general.

More problematic is the question of where to get advice. It is clear from the questionnaire that 51% felt this to be an issue in one form or another. From this perspective, the figures give cause for concern, with issues being certainly more acute at School X than the returns from the other studies – a difference of around 10%. However, when one compares this with the communal domain, there may be cause for encouragement. Of the young people in the School X survey, 54% appear reasonably likely to talk with their friends, and at least 60% consider that they can discuss matters with one of their parents.

Table 7: 3 - To compare the results in the personal domain across the years  
2012 – 14 in School X

Personal Domain	School X: 'Gifted and Talented cohort' 2012-14		
	Yes %	Don't know %	No %
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	72	18	10
I find life really worth living	86	10	4
I feel that I am not much worth as a person	13	17	70
I often feel depressed	23	18	59
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	12	8	80
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	30	21	49
I am happy in my school	84	9	7

When reviewing the previous table, (7:2), the issue of depression was considered. From the answers in this domain, it is possible that there is a group within school would appear to suffer a lack of a sense of purpose or worth, while also coping with depressive tendencies.

Once such issues are highlighted, no school's leadership can ignore them. The positive nature of many of the returns indicates that, at School X, there is a basis from which to construct support for this significant minority

### The School X returns in 2012 and 2014

In the pursuit of clarity, it is useful to consider any significant differences between those who took the test in 2012 and those who did so in 2014 as evidenced in Table 7.4. This enables a greater precision in terms of the judgements formed on the basis of this data. Table 7: 4 highlights the differing returns. Given the consistency of the returns for in 2012 and in 2014. Given the data showing the greatest variation being only 3%, there is little that this comparison can add to the above.

Table 7:4 - To compare the results relating to the personal domain across the samples at School X: 2012 and 2014.

Personal Domain	2012 %	2014 %
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	70	73
I find life really worth living	86	87
I feel I am not much worth as a person	13	15
I often feel depressed	22	25
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	13	12
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	30	30
I am happy in my school	85	82

### The school X return by Year group

The exploration shown in Table 7.5 continues to seek a depth of understanding by breaking the data into the Year group returns. In this table both the 2012 and 2014 are combined into the particular year group.

Table 7:5 - To show the difference in data concerning the personal domain between Year groups at School.		
Personal domain	Y9 %	Y10 %
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	74	69
I find life really worth living	88	84
I feel I am not much worth as a person	16	11
I often feel depressed	23	24
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	12	12
I often long for someone to turn to for advice	32	28

This provides insight into the period of transition between Year 9 in Key Stage 3 and Y10 beginning Key stage 4. This is when GCSE options are chosen. As such, the focus of a young person's education becomes more serious in relation to choices for the future.

In this respect one might expect to find an anxiety reflected in the returns for the two years. This does not appear to be the case – and that is positive. The greatest difference between the two different year groups is 5%. However, it is clear that the returns from

Year 9 are more positive than those from Year 10. While this may be accounted for by the factors mentioned above, it may also be related to adolescence in general. In the short term this should not provide a cause for concern but would be a matter to watch over a period of time.

Again, it is worth remembering that the following discussion relates to what OfSTED judges to be an ‘outstanding’ school. This attempt at a selective summary allows a basis from which to judge the detail and accuracy of the SHQ. The School’s ‘SEF’ (SMSC) from 2013 is clear in the area of ‘vision and values’ that there is a “significant openness” within which pupils can explore their feelings of purpose, of worth, of value and of well-being in general. The existence of the SEF (SMSC) is one example of evidence here. This is extended when one considers the official and unofficial aspects of the school’s ethos, in that the House system is valued by the young people in the school, while the ‘petty rules’ are not. This is correlated by the comments within both the OfSTED report (2013) and the Good School’s Guide’s comments (Hilpern, 2014).

Returning to Bragg and Manchester’s (2011) view of ethos there is a natural relation here to the ‘feel’ of the school, to its expression in the issues of relationships and the subsequent interactions, where pupils value the school, but do not always seem certain of where to go for advice. There is an acknowledgement of a freedom for students to pursue their own beliefs, as well as a realisation of belonging and of being valued (which correlates to the communal dimension.) Even allowing for this the young people express a desire for a clearer structure being in place when it comes to being able to seek advice and support. It is evident from the minutes of the School Council that

pupils are able to negotiate with the school's leadership, which also is a positive reflection.

**A summary of the data from the school health questionnaire involving an evaluation of Spiritual health in the personal domain and the dialogical partners**

The returns within this exploration of the personal domain show that the evaluation from the four dialogical partners is reasonable and trustworthy as far as it goes. On the surface, there is a positive ethos; being one that is affirming and proactive. In fact, as one would expect with an 'outstanding' school, the returns here are more positive than those from other schools in this comparison. While the 'indicators' in the dialogue above show the student's apprehension about where to go to for advice, the SHQ begins to give detail to the problem that lies behind this request.

This personal study suggests that the majority of pupils at the school are happy, some 84%, and seem content with their own well-being. There was a significant minority, as much as a fifth of each year group, who expressed concern. For some 12% of pupils this is expressed in an anxiety about depressive feelings, and even suicidal thoughts. In this the spiritual health questionnaire gives evidence of a complexity that the various approaches to self-evaluation fail to discover. In this there is an issue to be addressed by any school leadership in terms of both systemic operation and individual support.

Of equal importance, in this data there is good evidence for the need to listen to the voices of young people; a point central to the reasoning in Francis and Robbins (2005) for the use of the spiritual health questionnaire. This is also reflected in the work by Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012) and Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017). Here detail is given to that which has been alluded to in previous attempts at evaluation. The strength of this is seen in that, even the discussions with the pupil led School Council, failed to provide such depth or clear evidence. The school's leadership cannot fail to pay attention to this for its individual members and for itself as an institution (Bell, Taylor, & Driscoll 2012). Bragg and Manchester (2011) highlight the need to view such indicators seriously.

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## Chapter Eight: Exploring the Communal Domain

### Introduction

The communal domain is recognised as an essential aspect of education, involving both the individual and the collective. In this context the school should be seen as a place to add spiritual and moral development. In this the concept of spiritual health gives a basis for a continuum from individual to the collective to the organisation. Further to the definitions already offered, (Fisher, 1998; Francis & Robbins, 2005), West-Burnham and Jones (2008) see the area of the communal as:

one of the most powerful vehicles for developing spiritual understanding ...  
crucial to the development of senses of identity - both personal and collective  
... it is through social interaction that we learn to be moral ... morality  
remains an abstract ethical theory unless we apply it and it is in the application  
that we develop moral understanding and so learn how to behave in a moral  
way. (West-Burnham & Jones, 2008, p. 57)

While there is debate about how best to identify and educate the gifted and talented, there is agreement that they form a particular group, and require particular consideration (Campbell, Muijs, Neelands, Robinson, Eyre, & Hewston, 2007; Campbell, Eyre, Muijs, Neelands, & Robinson, 2007; Tomlinson, 2008; Worrell & Erwin, 2011). This exploration involves such a consideration.

The understanding brought to this process of development and application by the communal domain within spiritual health provides a quantitative basis to understand the individual as well as the collective. West-Burnham and Jones (2008) see this as a

dynamic not just for the individual but also for the organisational improvement of the school. Such improvement needs to be led on the basis of a factual understanding.

### **The aim of the chapter**

The aim of this chapter is in keeping with the approach adopted and outlined in the previous chapter concerning the personal domain. This is to interact with the previous research where the spiritual health questionnaire has been operationalised in a less educationally selective setting. School X has a concentration is on the top fifteen percent of the academic range and hence this is the focus of this study. Once again it is noted that such pupils exhibit particular tendencies that a school must address within their systems. Tirri and Kuusisto (2013) evidence the tendency among the gifted and talented to be individualistic, placing a high value on freedom of choice. Within the context of the communal domain there is an important interaction here between the individual and their community. In this setting the ethos and the curriculum of a school catering to the needs of such pupils will have an effect on stakeholders. The pupils' tendency towards individualism is an important concern when looking at spiritual health within the definition of ethos. This is important for the management of this ethos within School X.

In an attempt to grasp both an overall picture and an understanding of deeper issues a quantitative investigation is applied to the communal domain (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012). This is a 'mixed methods' approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), as previously discussed. This forms the basis for the exploration with

the results from the work undertaken at School X. It is important to understand how the concept of ethos is applied in this setting, as was outlined in Chapter Four. It is the view of the present writer that such an undertaking requires an investigation using ‘multiple lens’ (Chase, 2007) in order to hear the voices of number and word. As previously noted, de Souza (2009a) speaks of such an undertaking as an exploration and this is a useful motif for what follows. The approach adopted in this work will be the dialogical interaction, involving the qualitative and quantitative interacting with narrative. This is explained previous chapters with the quantitative used to hold the qualitative to account.

### **The methodology applied in the chapter**

The method adopted in this chapter is similar to that in chapter 7 and in the following chapters. This is used in order to explore both the quantitative and the qualitative. The quantitative, the basis of the work, involves an investigation of the data generated by the questionnaire. The qualitative engages on this basis in conversation with the dialogical partners. This involves a use of narrative in the form of report and discussion, similar to the fusion of ideas, outlined in previous chapters. This fusion takes the quantitative and qualitative approaches and involves the data harvested in a ‘mixed methods’ approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). There is an awareness of the usefulness of this method to school leadership when looking at the specific issues that arise among the community of the ‘gifted and talented’.

### **The use of narrative in the chapter**

The narrative approach as applied to quantitative research in relation to the communal domains uses the link between words and number in order to give a comprehensive view of the data (Franzosi, 2009; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). In Elliott (2005) there is a practical discussion of combining the use of the quantitative and the qualitative. In Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) there is an example of combined operationalism. It is this combination that the four chapters exploring the four domains will follow. The present writer is aware that the use of narrative as a means of report and comment is more easily accommodated with the qualitative tradition, but given the examples above, does have a confidence in its usefulness in this setting.

### **The procedure of the chapter**

The chapter will involve the following procedure. There will be a threefold approach to considering the communal domain within school X. Firstly, this will involve a consideration of what indicators there might be to provide an insight into the concept of ethos. The second aspect of the exploration will be to see what information and judgement can be gained from an involvement with the four dialogical partners. The third area will be to consider school X's data from the questionnaire. This will involve considering the operation of the data in different settings. Finally, these three areas will lead to a summary. This summary will contrast the qualitative views of the dialogical partners with that of the quantitative data. Once again, the quantitative holds the qualitative to account.

**The application of the concept of ‘ethos’ to the communal domain in the context of this research.**

In relation to the concept of ethos outlined in Chapter Four, this chapter uses the ‘indicators’, suggested by Bragg and Manchester (2011), in relation to the communal domain. Here the dialogue involves allowing the indicators to give an insight into the communal domain (Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2007). This section, the concept of ethos, and that of spiritual health, involve gathering information so as to provide insight into the key areas of relationship, all of which have a major impact on well-being as well as learning. This is an area of constant importance as an increasing diverse approach to individual freedom is celebrated in society. When pupils answer the questions here any number of factors can be relevant. These factors include such aspects as the nature of the school and the nature of the individual. Issues such as differing approaches to parenting, or to sexuality are examples of this. The context of the school, being single sex, and the nature of residence equally are informative in this domain. Issues within a school with partial boarding take on a different perspective than those within a day school community, with matters of friendship and life choices requiring careful consideration.

As with the personal domain, the communal domain is approached with the guidance of the domain, but with consideration being given to the areas highlighted by Bragg and Manchester (2011) relating to the definition of ethos. Table 8:1 relates the definitions of the domain to the indicators defined by Bragg and Manchester, providing an example of this engagement. The following table seeks to suggest questioning in relevant areas

to begin to explore this with a view to informing the leadership of the school in strategic matters of evaluation and direction.

Table 8:1: to show the relation between the communal domain (Francis & Robbins, 2005) with Bragg and Manchester's (2011) approach to ethos by the use of indicators.	
Communal Domain of Spiritual Health	Discussion with the concept of 'Ethos' – 'indicators' of debate, relating to Bragg and Manchester, (2011 pp. 1 – 2) – <i>referred to in italics.</i>
<p>"The three key areas of experience which access this dimension of spiritual health among adolescents' concern, relationships with parents, relationship with friends, and relationships at school." (Francis &amp; Robbins, 2005; P.43)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do the policies and practices of the school encourage this domain? <i>(Values and Vision)</i></li> <li>• Does the school have both official and unofficial ways of allowing pupils to express their concerns about relationships? <i>(Official and unofficial views of school)</i></li> <li>• Are the pupils clear about how the school handles bullying? <i>(Relationships and interactions)</i></li> <li>• Do the pupils 'feel' that issues such as bullying are handled effectively? <i>(The evident reality but one not easily articulated)</i></li> <li>• To what extent does the material and social organisation of the school community impact on the individual? <i>(Expression of material and social facets of ethos)</i></li> <li>• Are pupils able to negotiate key changes in their life choices within the school community? <i>(Systems of negotiation or imposition)</i></li> <li>• Does the learning that goes on within the school adequately use the pupil's skills and experience? <i>(Effectiveness and learning)</i></li> </ul>

Within the following areas there is an exploration of the school's own view, as well as that of its pupils. Central to this process should be an investigation as to whether the selection of young people of high ability helps or hinders their community health and development.

### **The dialogical consideration of the communal domain**

In the pursuit highlighted above, the dialogue between the four documents already mentioned, and the results from the spiritual health questionnaire now continues with the communal domain. This is the procedure already explained.

### **The first dialogical partner: What the School's 'SEF' (School Evaluation form) says about 'SMSC' (Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) and the Communal domain**

Given the nature of the SEF at the school, with the emphasis on establishing a community in which the individual can thrive, it may be argued that this domain is underrepresented. It is ironic that areas that are likely to be of prime importance to a boy at KS4, such as their attractiveness to the opposite sex (or to the same sex) are hard to find. In an area where the spiritual and the moral overlap, the SEF does record that there are times among the pupil body and their involvement of staff:

when perhaps there is occasional morale fibre lacking in one or two, there is a strong reaction to make it right... (for example) ... the recent issue faced in tackling the way one or two girls were treated in the sixth form. They approached willingly, clear in their beliefs and willing to engage in dialogue to

move matters forward – quite humbling, bearing in mind their years. (School X/ SEF, 2013)

This involves pupils outside the range of the spiritual health questionnaire but does suggest a system within which there is some way forward. In a similar fashion, the SEF (2013) reports:

The strength of the Staff-Pupil relationships is key to effective learning and willing contribution...a drugs matter ...was brought to our attention by pupils who stated it was wrong. (School X/ SEF, 2013)

Also,

On the rare occasions when we have unkindness from one to another, it is frequently brought to the attention of staff by pupils. (School X/ SEF, 2013)

Once again, it is important to see if this is reflected in the returns from the questionnaire. Clearly there are issues and this can be seen in the admission that what was alluded to earlier, in terms of prejudicial language and behaviour, is a problem, but not one that is ignored.

The SEF (2013) comments that:

We do suffer from the ... culture being typically 'boyish' – work has already begun in addressing stereo-typing of girls, homosexuals and those from the Indian sub-continent. This culture has influenced some, but is being worked out of our school slowly, at a natural pace. (School X/ SEF, 2013)

The question that arises here concerns 'a natural pace'. The present researcher will look to see if this pace is evidenced in a positive, or negative manner, when looking at whether or not pupils feel supported, safe from bullying and like the people they are at school with. The SEF does indicate a seriousness within the school to grasp such matters.

**The second dialogical partner: What the OfSTED report on the school, in 2013, says about the communal domain**

The OfSTED report speaks as well about areas relating to the communal domain as one would expect from an establishment judged to be outstanding. As with previous discussions, our consideration relates to the comments given in a less specific setting, but this is nonetheless of use. OfSTED is not asked to make a judgement concerning a pupil's relationships with parents, friends or the school, but using the view of 'ethos' it is possible to inform an investigation into this domain.

The report does refer to positive relations between staff and students, with the focus being beyond purely the academic, yet within an environment that allows for academic success. This is evidenced in the comment that:

teachers know students exceptionally well as individuals. They ensure that teaching fuels students' interests and encourages them to be active and independent learners. (School X/ OFSTED, 2013, p. 1)

Many of the other areas of concern within this domain, such as the issue of bullying, are mentioned positively:

students know how to keep themselves safe. They appreciate the need for sensible behaviour using modern technology and social networking sites. The school takes a firm stand against any prejudice-based bullying such as racist, homophobic and trans-gender bullying and sexism. Students stated they felt accepted for who they are. All students spoken to stated they felt safe at school and in the rare instances of bullying knew who to go to for support. They are confident that any bullying is dealt with swiftly. (School X/ OFSTED, 2013, p. 5)

The sense of acceptance, offers a place of comfort, while also encouraging a challenge where necessary, in such areas as ‘any prejudice-based bullying such as racist, homophobic and trans-gender bullying and sexism’.

It is clear from the report that there is a systemic approach to this, not just within the official school systems, but within the life of the student body. This aspect of the school’s ethos is clear in the following two comments. Firstly, that:

Students regulate their own behaviour. The sixth-form students, especially in boarding houses and within the house system, are key to ensuring this. Older students model high standards of behaviour for younger students. They take responsibility for the care and welfare of younger students and ensure that school is a caring community. (School X/ OFSTED, 2013, p. 5)

Secondly, that:

Central to the students’ development and the school ethos is the house system, which provides an exceptional sense of belonging that is valued very highly by the students. Their feeling of safety, high standards of behaviour and mutual support generate themselves from a strongly defined system of support through the houses. (School X/ OFSTED, 2013, p. 5)

As with the dialogue between OfSTED and the school relating to the personal domain, there is evidence here are a positive ethos, at least on the surface, or at least for the majority of students. It remains to be seen what the spiritual health questionnaire might discover lies beneath these calm waters.

**The third dialogical partner: What the ‘Good Schools Guide’ for 2014 says about the communal Domain.**

The comments in the Guide (Hilpern, 2013) concerning this domain, are worthy of note. For example, a comment recorded that the author of the report, on being shown round the School by Year 10 boys is insightful. The pupil’s ability to understand ‘empathetic nuances’ is noted, with the comment that this is not typical of pupils of such gender, at such an age. Equally the communal is drawn out when commenting on the emphasis on inclusion within the school, as something to which time and money has been devoted. This is evidenced in the breath and quality of sporting achievement and artistic endeavour.

Within the student body there are two areas of communal expression documented.

These are the systems involving peer mentoring, as well as the pupil activity within the House system. Both allow for a nurturing that enables a basis for the whole school body, that is the pupils, parents and staff, to engage in the business of education. This equally allows for both discipline and encouragement.

In the final judgement of the report, there is the following paragraph, which while a possible quote for several of the domains, does suggest a precision to the communal domain as witnessed within the school. (The same is true when considering the environmental domain.) The author writes that the School is:

as good as it gets for boys in a single sex school in its determination to prepare them for a world where white patriarchy is no longer the prevalent default

model...there is a charm about (school X) that is part to do with its rural catchment, part with an unaffected enthusiasm and part a thoughtfulness – not a combination that is easy to find. (Hilpern, 2014)

While the quote exhibits an insight to a number of matters, both on behalf of the author and of the school, it does suggest a strength of belonging that one hopes to find exhibited in the returns from the spiritual health questionnaire.

#### **The fourth dialogical partner: What the School's Student Council said about the communal domain in 2014**

Discussion involving this domain follows quite naturally from that recorded for the debate around the personal domain. Allowing for an awareness of what the 'communal' involved, a question as to the extent the school encouraged pupils to be part of a community, was posed. Lodge (2005) argues that this is evidence of a constructive participation of pupils with the school's leadership.

Within the actual debate there are both positives and negatives. On the positive side, again the House system was praised for encouraging an identity and aiding integration. The bonding of pupils gave them a basis on which to deliberate matters of family life, of sexuality and relationships and of dealing with bullying. The aspects of school life that were offered as examples of the systemic nature of this domain included House events, boarding, the role model of senior pupils, all of which were able to be aspirational. It was also commented that the presence of girls in Sixth form lead to a wider and more realistic community! Where there was dissent in relation to this

domain, it came from the younger pupils wishing to have a greater voice in school matters.

In respect to the SHQ the above suggests that the pupils are aware of what the Communal Domain involves, both individually and within the body of the school. It is evident that the school places a value on this domain. This forms a basis that allows for such matters to be raised by pupils, and for the support to be given by both pupils and staff. Equally, the debate in this chapter suggests that this is an area that still needs consideration.

### **The SHQ returns for the communal domain**

In a similar manner, as with the personal domain, it is important now to consider the further ‘settings’ (being those of the ‘Overall Health Check’ from 2005 and the work undertaken involving schools without a religious character in 2012), alongside the actual returns, for this domain, across the three surveys. The choice of these three areas is explained in chapter 7 allows for comparison. This first section compares the perception of community between the three studies in order to give a basis for the investigation as to how healthy the young people at School X are in this area. This communal area is one that was praised by Ofsted during the 2013 inspection (OfSTED, 2013). With this in mind, what follows is of particular interest.

After considering the four dialogical partners above, it is now necessary to view the material from the use of the spiritual health questionnaire, both within the school and in more general settings. (The further ‘settings’ being the ‘Overall Health Check’ from 2005 and the work undertaken involving schools without a religious character in 2012.) Following this comparison there is a consideration of three other aspects of data. These are a view of the overall return from School X for both cohorts, 2012 and 2014; an assessment of the data from 2012 and 2014; and finally, a look at the data generated by the Year groups combining both cohorts. This allows for a depth of exploration in what follows.

### **The study at school X and other studies**

The results in Table 8:2 give a comparison with other schools, offering an insight that differs from the OfSTED judgement. These suggest that this is not an area of strength for School X. The respondents have a far greater concern about attractiveness to the opposite sex and their ability to get on with others. In the first case 48% expressed their concern whereas in the other studies this figure was in the mid-thirties. In the second instance 49% voiced anxiety whereas this differed elsewhere.

In 2005, the general figure was higher at 51%, but in 2012 the figure was 10% below the School X return. The complexity here, poses the question as whether or not a single sex entry in Years 9 and 10 has an effect? In the 2005 evidence it would appear that this is more an issue that girls had, rather than boys, so the nature of the intake of School X may not be the relevant issue.

There is some indication of this not being a straight forward issue when one notes that overall figures are confusing. In 2005 34% of those questioned were worried about their attractiveness, but by 2012 this had risen to 45%. On the other hand, the issue of getting on with one's peers has fallen from 51% to 39%. If nothing else, the questionnaire highlights issues for further investigation.

What is clear from the questioning, is that the School X pupils have better relationships with their parents, but not such strong ties to their peers. When asked about being able to talk to their mothers, the general figure was 50%, but for the School X students this rose to 62%. When it came to the openness with fathers, the figures were uniformly lower. The return in 2005 was 32%, but this had improved to 39% in the 2012 survey. The School X questionnaire showed a stronger return of 60%. It is not possible for the questionnaire to deduce the reasons for this. While the family links might have been stronger for the School X pupils, they certainly seemed to have greater difficulty talking with their peers. In the other surveys, the figure for being able to do this was in the mid-60's, whereas only 54% of the School X cohort felt they were comfortable with this. A possibility here is that the competitive nature of a school containing high achievers makes it more difficult for boys to share their problems with one another. Again, this is an issue for further study.

Table 8:2 - To the results of the use of the spiritual health questionnaire in three settings, allowing comparison with the communal domain.

	'Overall health Check' 2005	'Schools without a religious character' 2012	School X: 'Gifted and Talented cohort' 2012-14
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	Yes %	Don't know%	No %	Yes %	Don't know%	No %	Yes %	Don't know %	No %
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	34	36	30	45	23	32	48	15	37
I am worried about how I get on with other people	51	22	27	39	24	37	49	12	39
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with Mother/ mum	50	20	30	55	18	27	62	15	23
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with Father/ dad	32	23	45	39	23	38	60	15	25
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my close friends	64	19	17	65	15	20	54	18	28
I am worried about being bullied at school	28	22	50	20	18	62	16	10	74
I like the people I go to school with	90	7	3	85	10	5	86	9	5

It is indeed possible that the good parental and peer relationships at School X have enabled a basis on which an anti-bullying culture can be established. In the 'Ditch the

Label' annual bullying survey 2014 (ABS, 2014), produced by a number of anti-bullying charities, the figures suggested a more complex picture. This is a survey of 3,600 students between the ages of 13 – 18 but is of limited use in this research due to the fact that it does not break down the returns by age group or key stage. Hence a direct comparison is difficult, but some 45% of young people questioned reported an experience of bullying before the age of 18. For 26% of those responding, this bullying took place on a daily basis, involving verbal, physical and sexual assault. For the majority, 83%, this behaviour had a negative impact on their self-esteem, and for 10% it led to suicidal thoughts, and as such relates to the personal domain.

In the School X 2014 survey, the reasons for being bullied fall primarily into three areas. These are 'personal appearance' (40%), 'body shape, size and weight' (36%) and 'prejudiced based' bullying (34%), which includes homophobia, racism, religious discrimination, disability discrimination, cultural discrimination and transphobia. The issue of appearance and body shape may go some way to explain the higher than usual return in this area for School X. As such, a question is raised here for those considering the School X data about the nature of bullying in the community – and what the pupils consider to be bullying. This would be an issue for further investigation.

A final point of comparison relates to the pupils' perception of their enjoyment of the people that they learn with. The majority liked their school, which is impressive given the range and number of schools involved. Concerns about safety seem to be improving and certainly School X is seen as having less bullying than other surveys would suggest.

### **The overall School X return – 2012 – 14**

The previous paragraph highlighted the complexity of this area for School X despite the positive OfSTED comments (2013). Beyond the positive the evidence points to the need to question the variety of responses in this domain, requiring deeper consideration. Central to this process should be an investigation as to whether the selection of young people of high ability helps or hinders their community health and development. Table 8: 3 provides a depth of understanding in this area.

The areas of concern have already been highlighted – the worry about how others perceive them and how others view their attractiveness and their ability to get on with others. The very fact of the statements within the questionnaire, indicate the reality of these issues for adolescents.

The question for all schools is how best to foster a healthy approach to such communal aspects of education. The challenge for any school that gathers a particular cohort together with the aim for furthering their development and education is to make sure that the delivery is at least as good as the other options! In this respect the School X response would suggest that further thought needs to be given to this area of the formal and informal curriculum. While School X may not be able to claim that the pupils' ease with their parents is the result of the curriculum, it would be appropriate to celebrate other aspects of the young people's experience highlighted here. For pupils to feel safe in a school there has to be clear leadership and consistent care from the staff. This also has to be a reality among the pupil body.

Table 8:3 - To compare the results in the communal domain across the years  
2012 – 14 in School X.

Communal Domain.	School X: 'Gifted and Talented cohort' 2012-14
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	Yes %	Don't know %	No %
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	48	15	37
I am worried about how I get on with other people	49	12	39
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with Mother/ mum	62	15	23
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with Father/ dad	60	15	25
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my close friends	54	18	28
I am worried about being bullied at school	16	10	74
I like the people I go to school with	86	9	5

The School X return indicates that this is the case. As such, young people should have a good basis to interact positively with their peers. If this is not happening, or is not reflected in the SHQ, then this again is a reason for further investigation.

### The School X returns 2012 and 2014

In this area, Table 8: 4 shows a consistency across the two different responses, 2012 and 2014. There are, as discussed above, a number of positive issues concerning the communal health of the school community.

Table 8:4 - To compare the results relating to the communal domain across the samples at School X: 2012 and 2014.

Communal Domain	2012 - %	2014 - %
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	46	51
I am worried about how I get on with other people	51	47
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mum	61	63
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my dad	59	60
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with close friends	56	52
I am worried about being bullied at school	14	19
I like the people I go to school with	89	82

However, what is also clear, is that, if only 82% of the community like the people they go to school with, that means that one in five is attending school with people they do not like – and this should become a matter for debate within the school community. If this were to happen, it would evidence the activity of what is expressed in the ideal of communal health, allowing the individual to engage with their surroundings. Within an area that requires a strategic consideration, the consistency evidenced here provides a useful platform for this action.

### **The School X return by Year Group**

Once again, as Table 8.5 shows, there is actually no great deviation between the two different Year groups, other than the 90% of people who like the people they go to school with in Y9 falls to 81% in Year 10. This would be an issue to be explored by form tutors in their time provided for such matters. This is another example of using the results to further the development of holistic support within the school community.

The basic consistency witnessed in Table 8: 5 provides a useful basis for ongoing systemic discussion in keeping with that already mentioned in this chapter.

Table 8:5 - To show the difference in data concerning the communal domain between Year groups at School X

Communal domain	Y9 %	Y10 %
I am worried about my attractiveness to the opposite sex	51	45
I am worried about how I get on with other people	49	49
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my mum	62	62
I find it helpful to talk about my problems with my dad	58	61
I am worried about being bullied at school	16	16
I like the people I go to school with	90	81

**A summary of the data from the SHQ involving an evaluation of spiritual health in the communal domain**

It has already been noted that the communal domain is an area that the school may need to reconsider. As noted in this chapter, in all four of the expressions of evaluation, the positive is manifest. The Good Schools Guide (Hilpern, 2013) speaks of an inclusive ethos within the school, in both the official and unofficial expressions of school life. The school's own self-evaluation acknowledges that it is possible for pupils to challenge the behaviour of others, as well as the decisions of the schools' leadership.

Both these points are recognised by OfSTED, when detailing the level of acceptance and belonging to be found in the school's material and social expressions of its ethos.

The data generated by the questionnaire provides a useful basis for insight and questioning. On the one hand, there is a significant amount of constructive evidence concerning this domain – the House system, the formal and informal curriculum and positive teacher-student relationships. School X compares favourably with the data from the other studies, the 'Overall Health Check' (2005) and the results from the investigation into 'Schools without a religious character' (2012) There is a complexity here in that much evidences a spiritually healthy communal domain, but concerns arise in the data from the survey of those at School X (2013) when one considers the minority responses.

This complexity is evident where the research offers examples of concern. The evaluative documents also consider the problems within the student body, reflected in behaviour that is unacceptable to others. This might include racist, sexist or homophobic language, but might on occasion involve physical aspects of poor behaviour. In this area of complexity there is ample room to be informed by the voice of the young people who make up the student body, hence to the spiritual health questionnaire.

Further complexity can be found in the fact that while 74% are not concerned about bullying, that leaves a quarter of the school for whom, to one degree or another, this is a

concern for a significant minority. This begins to become a recurring theme. For the majority, that which is celebrated in the four dialogical attempts at evaluation is largely true. Within this, there is a minority group for whom belonging to the community seems to lack surety. In the communal domain, the spiritual health questionnaire suggests that this minority have problems relating to sexual matters, to self-image and to their own safety. According to the data, this group includes some of those who like those they attend the school with. This is again an area of intricacy and these returns point to both the need to be aware of this, and the need to be able to dig deeper. Here the questionnaire has provided the evidence and the guidance for further endeavour.

At the onset of this section, it was noted that central to this process should be an investigation as to whether the selection of young people of high ability helps or hinders their community's health and development. There is nothing in the data that gives rise to an argument either way, but what can be argued is that the questionnaire is beneficial in uncovering the attitudes, aspirations, motivations and opinions for this cohort in this domain. There is however a means of questioning the effectiveness of the school in this domain, in the areas of leadership, curriculum and pastoral systems.

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## **Chapter Nine: Exploring the Environmental Domain**

### **Introduction**

In this context of the environmental domain, a key consideration is the application of the spiritual health questionnaire to a sample of pupils considered ‘gifted and talented’. As with the previous two chapters, this involves a consideration of how effectively the spiritual health questionnaire is able to view the wellbeing of a particular sample, with the focus of this chapter being the environmental domain. Once again, the purpose relates to how the usefulness of such an investigation can inform the leadership of a school.

This purpose is demonstrated in West-Burnham and Jones’s (2008) evaluation of the environmental domain which they describe as ‘the natural world’. The power of this area is expressed as:

our engagement with the natural world is one of the most powerful sources of spiritual insight and inspiration. How we engage with the world is emerging as a dominant moral issue – and one that children and young people have a natural affinity with ... the current ... debate around environmental issues ... providing a forum for moral, spiritual and political debate. (West-Burnham & Jones, 2008, p. 96)

This demonstrates the importance of this area for pupils, for schools and for school leadership. This also provides a clear indication of the importance of this domain.

### **The aim of the chapter**

This chapter is to interact with the previous research (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012) operationalised in a less educationally selective setting, in order to engage with a sample considered to be the ‘gifted and talented’. Such pupils exhibit particular tendencies and if the school does not foster an understanding of such it runs the risk of harming those within their systems. Tirri and Kuusisto (2013) evidence the tendency among the gifted and talented to be individualistic, placing a high value on freedom of choice. In this setting the ethos and the curriculum of a school catering to the needs of such pupils will have an effect on stakeholders. There is also evidence that a breath of approach provides a fuller picture (Francis & Robbins, 2005; de Souza, 2014). It is important to understand how the concept of ethos is applied in this setting.

Previous comments have drawn attention to how the work of both Fisher, in Chapter Two, and Francis in Chapter Three rely on a quantitative operation. This provides an essential basis for school leaders to consider the effectiveness of their systems. However, OfSTED requires a fusion of both quantitative and qualitative material to form the basis for the decision-making process during inspection. Equally it is expected that a school will be able to exhibit an understanding of the practices and views within it that are based on both research strands. It is the view of the present writer that such an undertaking requires an investigation using ‘multiple lens’ (Chase, 2007) in order to hear the (multiple) voices of number and word. de Souza (2009a) speaks of such an undertaking as an exploration and this is a useful motif for what follows. The approach

adopted in this work will be the dialogical interaction, involving the qualitative and quantitative interacting with narrative, as explained previous chapters.

### **The methodology applied in the chapter**

The method adopted in this chapter follows that of the previous two chapters, being chosen in order to explore both the quantitative and the qualitative (Brannon, 2005). However, the base for this exploration is the quantitative. This adopts a ‘mixed methods’ approach to the research and the discussion, as suggested in Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007), Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), and Creswell and Creswell (2017). This involves the ‘multiple lens’ (Chase, 2007) in order to consider both individual experience and institutional experience. Such ideas are explored by Zeeman, Poggenpoel, Myburgh, and Van Der Linde (2002), Packwood and Sikes (2006), Chase (2007), Heikkinen, Huttunen, and Syrjälä (2007), Wren (2011), and Gockel (2012). Much of this research originates within the qualitative setting, and within psychological approaches to research in education, but it does involve and enhance the quantitative. As such, the quantitative basis involves an investigation of the data generated by the questionnaire (Francis, 2010; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). The qualitative engages in conversation with the dialogical partners and involves a use of narrative in the form of report and discussion (Benefiel, 2003, 2005); Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). Here the narrative of the school’s involvement in this area, as well as the empirical evidence from the questionnaire provide an important insight beneath the surface of the life of the school. The narrative approach adopted here requires a discussion of the data generated in the quantitative context by the spiritual health questionnaire. It does so in

relation to two areas. The first approach is that of the data in comparison with similar data from other research (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012). The second looks at the data generated in the context of the school, engaging with the four dialogical partners mentioned in chapter six. In both cases, there is an awareness of the usefulness of this to school leadership. The usefulness is secured in the ability of this fusion of research styles to provide evidence of the indicators highlighted by Bragg and Manchester (2011) when considering ethos and wellbeing.

### **The use of narrative in the chapter**

The narrative approach as applied to quantitative research uses the link between words and number in order to give a comprehensive view of the data (Franzosi, 2009). In Elliott (2005) there is a practical discussion of combining the use of the quantitative and the qualitative. In Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) there is an example of combined operationalism. It is this combination that the next four chapters will follow. The present writer is aware that the use of narrative as a means of report and comment is more easily accommodated with the qualitative tradition, but given the examples above, does have a confidence in its usefulness in this setting. This is in keeping with the OfSTED inspection questioning and the indicators of Bragg and Manchester (2011).

### **The procedure of the chapter**

The chapter will involve the following established procedure. There will be a threefold approach to considering the environmental domain within School X. Firstly, this will involve a reflection of what indicators there might be to provide an insight into the

concept of ethos. The second aspect of the exploration will be to see what information and judgement can be gained from an involvement with the four dialogical partners. The third aspect will be to consider School X's data from the questionnaire. This will involve considering the operation of the data in different settings. Finally, these three areas will lead to a summary. This summary will contrast the qualitative views of the dialogical partners with that of the quantitative data. The quantitative will be used as a basis on which to judge the qualitative.

### **The application of the concept of 'ethos' to the environmental domain in the context of this research**

Bearing in mind the earlier discussion concerning ethos in chapter four and the relation of ethos to the environmental domain, Table 9: 1 outlines possible indicators to inform this debate. The aim of such an approach is to help focus the investigation within each domain, and in so doing to give credence to the issues relating to the overlap within the body of evidence. This gives serious consideration to the areas highlighted by Bragg and Manchester (2011) relating to the definition of ethos. This approach also uses the concept and domains of the concept of spiritual health (Francis & Robbins, 2005) as the guiding principle. The aim here is to gather information found at the surface level, but that also operates from a less official, more subterranean experience. As such, this touches on Bragg and Manchester's (2011) understanding of official and unofficial views of school. The intention is to judge whether or not pupils can be said to enjoy a good level of spiritual health in the environmental domain. For this exploration to have a real validity it is important that the question relating to the 'indicators' base answers on quantitative data. This involves the definition of the environmental domain

interacting with the indicators of ethos in a pragmatic fashion. Table 9: 1 indicates where the quantitative and the qualitative merge in this respect.

The issues encompassed within this domain, with its questions on racial issues, immigration, violence in the arts, pollution, poverty war is always relevant. As such they need to be centrally considered within a school's formal and informal curriculum. Weare and Nind (2011) and Weare (2013) view such concerns as needing a whole school approach. Hence, these concerns relate to a school's ethos and leadership. In a similar fashion West-Burnham and Jones (2008) highlight the need for moral development relating to these issues and for this to be clearly led in schools.

In the environmental domain the pupil will, by various means, come to a decision on the issues, and how they respond to these issues. It would be reasonable to assume that a spiritually healthy environment enabled pupils to this process positively (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, 2010; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). Such engagement would need to not be purely cerebral, but should allow for a practical outworking of ideas, even for a form of praxis.

Table 9:1 - To show the relation between the environmental domain with Bragg and Manchester's (2011) approach to ethos and wellbeing by the use of indicators

Environmental Domain of Spiritual Health	Discussion with the concept of 'Ethos' – 'indicators' of debate, in Bragg and Manchester (2011 pp. 1- 2) – <i>referred to in italics.</i>
<p>This area relates to the pupils</p> <p>"... connectedness with and interdependence with the natural, physical and human global environment and with what young people feel about that domain."</p> <p>(Francis &amp; Robbins, 2005; p. 46)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the environmental domain evidenced, managed and celebrated within the school's value systems? <i>(Values and Vision)</i></li> <li>• In the pupil's perception is there a consistency between what the school claims to do in these areas and the reality? <i>(Official and unofficial views of school)</i></li> <li>• To what extent are pupils involving in the writing and monitoring of policies in relation to these issues? <i>(Relationships and interaction)</i></li> <li>• Does the 'feel' of the school suggest a healthy celebration of diversity or connection? <i>(The evident but not easily articulated)</i></li> <li>• How do pupil's views on these matters find expression in the formal life of the school? <i>(Expressions of material and social facets of ethos)</i></li> <li>• What systems are there in place for pupils to challenge the school's view on such matters? <i>(Systems of negotiation or imposition)</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What evidence is there that the formal and informal curriculum is involved with this domain? <i>(Effectiveness and learning)</i></li> </ul>
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Once again, the fact that the questionnaire allows for evidence (beyond that of the school's systems of recording matters) is important.

### **The dialogical consideration of the environmental domain**

This chapter proceeds to look at the qualitative aspects of this exploration by examining the comments of the four dialogical partners in respect to the environmental domain within School X.

### **The first dialogical partner: What the School's 'SEF' (School Evaluation form) says about 'SMSC' (Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) and the environmental domain**

The SEF document does not deal specifically with the environmental domain, but there are clear segments within it that inform this area. This is seen in the approach that is driven by noting examples of praxis, as suggested in Francis and Robbins (2005). The issues relating to individual interconnectedness and interdependence with the different communities encountered are focussed on questions relating to immigration, the environment, the developing world and so on. Also, within this discussion is the question of whether or not the individuals feel that they are in a position to solve such problems, or at least to make a difference.

As in the previous discussions concerning the personal and communal domains, it is in the sections of the SEF that deal with personal insight and spiritual development, the areas of moral understanding and dealing with relationships and those looking at social development, that one sees the degree of belonging within the pupil body of the school. However, it is when the SEF deals with issues relating to understanding and respect for different cultures that there is a more precise report. Here there is the noting of problems relating to racial tensions, expressed in unacceptable language. There is also a more positive report of a community allowing for an integration that allows for diversity. This suggests an openness to the cultures of others and to the concept that individuals can influence those around them. There is a record that the use of assemblies within the school contributes positively and provocatively to this area. Nevertheless, the challenge is to see whether this basis is enough. The SHQ will give a further insight as to whether or not more needs to be done in this area within the school.

### **The second dialogical partner: What the OfSTED report (2013) says about the environmental domain**

There is evidence that the school addresses the concerns of this domain within the report when dealing with both the formal and informal aspects of the curriculum. It is noted that:

The rich and varied curriculum, coupled with outstanding teaching over time, ensures that all students develop excellent attitudes to learning and achieve extremely well. Academic standards are exceptionally high. The excellent educational opportunities, in particular the extensive range of extra-curricular activities, develop in students a wide range of personal skills and attributes that

equip them exceedingly well for the next stage of their education and the world beyond school. (School X/ OFSTED 2013, p. 1)

The key here is not a reference to particular areas, such as issues of population and the developing world, but is more focussed in the usefulness of opportunities to develop the wide range of skills and attributes that equip pupils for their education career and beyond. In this pursuit, the researcher would hope to see signs of this development in the results of the questionnaire. It would be most unlikely for a school to receive an ‘outstanding’ judgement in this area if the inspectors did not feel that this judgement could be formed on the evidence seen within the curriculum and the ethos. This means that the judgement itself becomes evidence of the reality of the environmental domain within the life of the school – at least at the level of this inspection. This is also evidence of the domain being a reality for the student community.

### **The third dialogical partner: What the ‘Good Schools Guide’ (2014) says about the environmental domain**

In dealing with the previous domain there was comment about the Good School’s Guide (Hilpern, 2014) picking up on an enthusiasm and thoughtfulness within the community of the School. In relation to this domain, one considers both the immediate, the national and the international connections involved in the School. The cultural mix of the school belies its rural location. Boarding pupils from Africa and Asia, and day pupils from a range of urban areas make the above judgement even more telling. It is here that the researcher looks for evidence in the pupils returns to inform discussion on both the formal and informal aspects of the curriculum. This will provide an insight to perceptions concerning issues such as immigration, poverty and nuclear war. It will

also allow the researcher to form a judgement on the pupils' belief in their ability to make a difference in their world.

The report suggests, as already noted, an ethos of hard work, of involvement and a commitment to 'celebrating diversity'. In this context, there is comment of the School maintaining a 'rigorous' scrutiny of racist, sexist and homophobic attitudes and issues. The present researcher would expect to find this reflected in comments from the SHQ relating to immigration and foreigners. As one might expect, the report notes that:

Students spoke easily about such matters as respect, community and equality, and see a major strength of the school as encouraging everyone to be themselves. (Hilpern, 2014)

This suggests an environmental ease within a multicultural community, but it does not provide a guide into whether or not pupils feel that can confront and change that which they believe needs to be altered in the immediate and more far-reaching contexts.

(Again, in relation to this matter, the researcher looks to the returns from the SHQ.)

#### **The fourth dialogical partner: What the School's Student Council said about the environmental domain in 2014**

Following the model discussed in the previous two chapters, a similar procedure was adopted with the environment domain. The question was posed asking to what extent the School encouraged pupils to be aware of the world around them. Positively, a number of examples were offered by the pupils to evidence their perception that the school did well in this area. The examples included the diverse nature of the school (within its rural setting) the diversity of the assemblies, both in the Houses and

involving the full school. It was argued that there was time and space to debate relevant, topical issues, such as poverty and development, within the RS and Citizenship lessons, during form time in class, and during extracurricular activities such as the debating clubs.

Less positively, there was a questioning of whether or not it was a good thing to have little or no exposure to crime and physical violence within society. The debate here focussed upon the issue of whether or not this prepares individuals for life beyond school. (Some pupils were keen to state that their understanding of such experiences did not lead them to suppose that a sheltered community was a negative thing.) As with the previous domains, the debate surrounding the environmental showed a range of opinions but allowed for a reasonable consensus.

### **The SHQ returns for the environmental domain**

The focus in this domain surrounds individuals' connectedness and interdependence with the world in which they live. Within this what a young person believes about their relationship with the natural, physical and human global environments is examined.

The praxis of this is expressed by Francis and Robbins (2005) as:

At this human level the human spirit recognises the unity and connectedness between the self and the rest of the universe. Good spiritual health in the environmental domain is reflecting responsibility for matters of environmental concern and for matters of global and sustainable development. (Francis and Robbins, 2005, p. 35)

As such, in this area, the researcher is looking for a willingness to engage with global issues, and a belief that some difference can be made, even if only on a local basis.

After the outline above considering the four dialogical partners, it is now necessary to view the material from the use of the spiritual health questionnaire, both within the school and in more general settings: the further 'settings' being the 'Overall Health Check' from 2005 and the work undertaken involving schools without a religious character in 2012. Following this comparison there is a consideration of three other aspects of data. These are a view of the overall return from School X for both cohorts, 2012 and 2014; an assessment of the data from 2012 and 2014; and finally, considering the data generated by the Year groups combining both cohorts. This allows for a depth of exploration.

### **The study of School X and other studies**

Here, again, the returns of two national surveys are used to form a comparison with those from School X in Table 9: 2. The inclusion of the issues in this domain shows the on-going relevance of the questionnaire. Where a generation ago the nuclear issue would have been to the fore, it is now less contentious. However, the reality of war and poverty and the problem of suffering often confront pupils in Years 9 and 10. While in 2005 the issue of immigration and of 'Britishness', and of belonging, were lesser concerns, once again they are an aspect of contemporary debate. This in itself shows the usefulness the questionnaire. The responses over the period 2005 to 2014 reflect that changing nature of healthy awareness, but also the contrast requirements for clear thought and empathy. A

young person needs to think beyond themselves and look to wider issues. This is evidenced in the table 9:2 below.

Table 9:2 – To show results of the use of the SHQ in three settings, allowing comparison with the environmental domain

	'Overall health Check' 2005			'Schools without a religious character' 2012			School X: 'Gifted and Talented cohort' 2012-14		
	Yes %	Don't know %	No %	Yes %	Don't know %	No %	Yes %	Don't know %	No %
I think immigration should be resisted	32	39	29	42	21	37	40	24	36
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	64	26	10	50	26	24	64	19	17
I am concerned about the poverty of the developing world (e.g. Africa)	59	27	14	62	25	13	75	15	10
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	55	26	19	40	27	33	46	23	31
There is nothing I can do to solve the world's problems	26	31	43	20	31	49	19	24	57
I would like to make a difference in the world *	X	X	X	66	26	8	85	12	3
There are too many foreign people in the country	17	15	68	51	23	26	36	19	45

\* This question in 2005 concerned with violence on TV.

The first topic to consider here is that of immigration and of what makes someone foreign. Attitudes to immigration have hardened over the period 2005 to 2014, with more concerned, as seen by the 40% of young people at the school wanting a restriction. There is however a complexity here, and this becomes apparent when one compares the question on immigration with that of whether or not there are 'too many foreign people in the country'. While the return has fallen significantly from the 2005 figure of 68%, there were still 43% of respondents at School X disagreeing with the statement. This was noteworthy because of the variance between this figure and the 23% voicing disagreement in the 2012 survey. This could be taken to reflect some level of debate within society being demonstrated by the participants.

This is a combination of the communal and the environmental. One can consider how individuals' perceptions of themselves might affect how they perceive 'the other'. This is equally true when turning to matters such as pollution, poverty or nuclear issues.

When considering the issue of pollution there was a shift in the work of Francis from 2005, with a return of 64% in 2005, to that of 50% in 2012. The School X results however remain at the previous higher figure of 64% being concerned about the risk of pollution worldwide. It would seem to be a positive reflection on the spiritual health of the cohort that, those in a sheltered rural environment are looking outwards. A similar comment can be made about concern for poverty in the developing world. In the work of Francis about 60% of those questioned voiced concern. In the School X questionnaire 75% expressed their anxiety about this issue. The question about the risk of nuclear was considered to be less pressing. Possibly reflecting the change of debate within society the level of concern has fallen.

There is a divergence in returns when one deals with the two particular questions relating to the role of the individual in relation to the world's problems. In this area, the returns from School X show a significantly higher belief in the individual's understanding that they can 'make a difference', with 57% feeling that they could help with the world's problems and 85% answering positively to the prospect of their being able to make a difference. However, there is an alternative way of looking at this issue. If one combines the undecided with the relevant positive, then there is a less divergent picture. At best this (slightly constructed) approach shows the majority keen to be involved in making a difference, or at least willing to be persuaded by those who are certain of their involvement. At worst, it suggests the possibility of creating a significant groundswell for participation in these areas.

#### **The overall School X return – 2012 – 2014**

The clear positives in Table 9: 3 have already been debated in the previous section. School X is shown to be a community that predominately cares and wishes to do something to make this care a reality in the future. The 85% who responded that they would like to make a difference in the world evidences a community within which the individual realises their connection to global issues. Given the question of perceptions of self in the communal domain, interest here resides in the suggestion that while a number of individuals may yet not be entirely comfortable with themselves, they are still certain that they wish to be involved in broader issues beyond their own being. This is seen in the concern about pollution and poverty, and to a lesser extent about nuclear war.

Table 9:3 - To compare the SHQ combined results in the environmental domain across the years 2012 – 14 in School X

Environmental domain	Yes %	Don't know %	No %
I think immigration should be resisted	40	24	36
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	64	19	17
I am concerned about the poverty of the developing world (e.g. Africa)	75	15	10
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	46	23	31
There is nothing I can do to solve the world's problems	19	24	57
I would like to make a difference in the world *	85	12	3
There are too many foreign people in the country	36	19	45

\* This question in 2005 concerned with violence on TV.

Less laudable is the ambiguity about immigration. The term 'ambiguity', is used here because of the split between those who feel positively about an issue and those who feel negatively about an issue. In relation to immigration, there are clear groups who feel that immigration should be restricted and those who don't, with 40% opting for a restriction and 35% not wishing to see this. The difference when it comes to the number of foreign people in the country is a similar split. In this case the weight of the split is reversed, with 36% feeling there are too many foreign people in the country and 45 % disagreeing. In both cases there is the need for further investigation. It would be useful to understand exactly what pupils understood by the concepts of 'immigration' and 'foreign' – and how the two related. This is a useful springboard for the previously mentioned further discussion. With the case of the school X return, there needs to be an

exploration of what it means to be 'foreign'. In such a school community, that celebrates belonging, this should be an urgent and important matter since it goes to the heart of what kind of school this might be. (The OfSTED report of 2013 praised the school for its community ethos, placing a high value on belonging.)

Quite how these areas reflect the national political agenda is difficult to prove at this present point? The further investigation may well inform this question. Whatever the case might be, it would still be useful to continue the research over a number of years to see if this changes with the changing debate.

#### **The school X returns 2012 and 2014 by Year group**

Once again, in Table 9: 4 there is a similarity between the returns from the two different year groups, but there are interesting differences. On the issues of pollution, poverty, nuclear war, making a difference and considering the existence of foreign people in the country all show returns within a 4% similarity. Here there is a divergence when one turns to matters of immigration and solving the world's problems.

Table 9:4 to compare the results relating to the environmental domain across the samples at School X: 2012 and 2014

Environmental domain	2012 %	2014 %
I think immigration in Britain should be restricted	43	37
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	63	65
I am concerned about the poverty of the developing world (e.g. Africa)	75	74
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	19	19
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	24	14
I would like to make a difference in the world	83	86
There are too many foreign people in this country	35	38

Over the two-year period the number of pupils who felt that there was nothing that they could do to solve the world's problems fell from 24% to 14%; and the population of pupils who thought that immigration into Britain should be restricted fell from 43% to 37%. The present researcher would suggest that this requires further discussion, and observation, to see if a trend is emerging.

### **The School X returns by Year group**

Once again, in Table 9:5, there is a similarity between the Year groups. The greatest area of divergence concerns the issues of nuclear war, where there is a 10% difference.

Generally, pupils are more concerned about the issues of poverty and the environment, rather than immigration, but a significant number still question immigration.

Table 9: 5 - To show the difference in data concerning the environmental domain between Year groups at School X

Environmental domain	Y9 %	Y10 %
I think immigration in Britain should be restricted	38	43
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	66	61
I am concerned about the poverty of the developing world (e.g. Africa)	76	73
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	51	41
There is nothing I can do to help solve the world's problems	24	14
I would like to make a difference in the world	83	86
There are too many foreign people in this country	36	37

Another clear difference is that the Year 10 pupils feel far more positive about their ability to help solve the world's problems than the Year 9 do. It is notable that in both groups there is a positive response. It is worth noting that these areas, designed initially in the nineties, remain as important within schools years later as they were on their first questioning.

### **A summary of the data from the SHQ involving an evaluation of spiritual health in the environmental domain**

OfSTED (2013) is clear in its evaluation of the school's delivery in this area, with a focus on how this achieved. There is praise for both the formal and informal curriculum that is enhanced by outstanding teaching. In this there is a correlation with the school's SEF(SMSC) (2013) that dealt with the positive encouraging of debate, while not shirking dealing with the problematic aspects of school life that require discipline. This the school argued, and OfSTED agreed, was a successful attempt to extend the vision and values of the institution into reality.

OfSTED (2013, p.1) saw the ethos as one that allowed 'a wide range of skills and attitudes' to positively develop. The Good Schools Guide (Hilpern, 2013) also draws attention to the manner in which the students' community included a cultural mix that allowed for what it considered to be a major strength, that of respecting others and of valuing equality.

Where there is a voice of concern with the environmental domain, it comes from the Student Council. While it is clear in their comments that they value the school's contribution to this domain, they also raise an issue that is not evident in the other documents. It is from this source that there is a query of the safety of their world within the school. This is found in the questioning of whether or not they are too sheltered from the outside world. With this issue there is a return to the issue of complexity. OfSTED looks (rightly) for young people to feel safe in their school but does not

(generally) question whether or not this might actually create a cloistered setting, and one that does not prepare students for the world beyond school.

Further to the dialogical considerations, the data generated in the returns from the SHQ does not directly address this issue of the ‘safety’ of the school environs, of whether or not it is too sheltered. There are however indications, within the complexity of the ideas offered, that could be used to inform this issue. The use of language here is deliberately vague, due to the fact that there a number of factors beyond the school that could affect the return. The messages from home on matters like immigration or poverty are potentially defining. This is all the more possible in a situation where the results from the communal domain show that a number of pupils discuss a range of matters with their parents. Equally, the ‘voice’ of the students’ own youth culture is a major influence for many. The returns from the use of the questionnaire at School X are similar to those of the other two sets of data and this suggests that this is a broader problem that just that of one school. Gronhoj and Thogersen (2009) suggest that there is a strong parental influence in this domain, which correlates with the questions Francis and Robbins (2005) ask about the influence of parenting. This requires further consideration.

Ambiguity aside, and complexity recognised, there are important matters raised by the questionnaire. These can be seen as relating to the above questioning. These fall into the concept of relating to the ‘other’. Hence this covers the questions on immigration and poverty, pollution and nuclear war on the one hand, while leading to the individual’s ability to effect change on these problems. It is worth noting that more

pupils responded positively to the challenge of poverty (75%) and pollution (64%) than voiced a concern about immigration. It is also important to consider the clear return in relation to the statements about the world's problems and making a difference. Some 57% felt that it was possible to make a difference when faced with the world's problems, with 85% wanting to engage in that task. This would suggest that the safety of the school community has not had a negative effect on the attitude to the world outside. As such, there are grounds for arguing that the SHQ shows a strong spiritual health in this domain. This does not (quite) bear out the question asked by the School Council, but it does provide a focus for future consideration.

It is worth noting that, yet again, the data from the SHQ does indicate the need to go deeper than the four dialogical appraisals managed. While it is important to draw attention to a major strength of a school in its environmental openness, it is in listening to the voice of the young people who belong to that community that one achieves a precision, however complex or diverse. Weare (2013) would argue that the engagement with the School Council suggests a healthy environment that evidences good leadership.

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## **Chapter Ten: Exploring the Transcendental domain**

### **Introduction**

In the context of the transcendental domain, this chapter of the dissertation considers the application of the spiritual health questionnaire to a sample of gifted and talented pupils at School X. Here there is a reflection concerning the effectiveness of the spiritual health questionnaire in viewing the transcendental wellbeing of a particular sample. The reason for this is to see what use such an investigation might be for the leadership of a school.

The usefulness of this chapter is highlighted by West-Burnham and Huws Jones (2008) discussing the problems associated with education and the spiritual domain. The basis for this is that there is

a great potential danger in discussing the spiritual and moral development of young people is that we fail to see it as a learning process. It sometimes feels as if spiritual and moral learning is akin to osmosis, in other words, learning by proximity or it's simply a matter of replicating the appropriate language and behaviours ... spiritual and moral development has to be seen as a learning process that involves intellectual activity. Most importantly it involves a movement away from shallow and superficial repetition into deep learning that is characterised by the growth of personal understanding. (West-Burnham & Jones, 2008, p. 45)

While the transcendental domain is not primarily concerned with this leaning process, it is the basis on which the process begins and how it may be judged. The spiritual health

questionnaire encourages a quantitative approach which provides an informed insight into that which is 'most important' in the lives of individuals and the community.

### **The aim of the chapter**

In keeping with the previous three chapters, the aim is to interact with the previous research (Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012) where the spiritual health questionnaire has been operationalised in a less educationally selective setting than that of school X. These investigations cover a more comprehensive intake. At School X the focus is with the 'gifted and talented'. Such pupils exhibit particular tendencies and if the school does not foster an understanding of such it runs the risk of harming those within their systems. Tirri and Kuusisto (2013) evidence the tendency among the gifted and talented to be individualistic, placing a high value on freedom of choice. In this setting the ethos and the curriculum of a school catering to the needs of such pupils will have an effect on stakeholders. Quite how individual pupils within the school community respond to questions in this area is important. There is also evidence that a breadth of approach provides a fuller picture (Francis & Robbins, 2005; de Souza, 2014) and this is recognised in the dialogical approach. Within this investigation it is important to understand how the concept of ethos is applied in this setting.

Fisher's work, in chapter two, and Francis' work, in chapter three offer a quantitative operation, allowing school leaders a basis to consider the effectiveness of their systems. However, OfSTED requires a fusion of both quantitative and qualitative material to form the basis for the decision-making process during inspection. A school is expected

to be able to exhibit an understanding of the practices and views within it that are based on both research strands. It is the view of the present writer that such an undertaking requires an investigation using ‘multiple lens’ in order to hear the voices of number and word (Chase, 2007). de Souza (2009a) speaks of such an undertaking as an exploration and this is a useful motif for what follows. The approach adopted in this work will be the dialogical interaction, involving the qualitative and quantitative interacting with narrative, as explained previous chapters.

### **The methodology applied in the chapter**

The method adopted in this chapter and the preceding three chapters is chosen in order to explore both the quantitative and the qualitative (Brannon, 2005), from the basis of quantitative exploration. This adopts a ‘mixed methods’ approach to the research and the discussion, as suggested in Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), Burke Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007), Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), and Creswell and Creswell (2017). This involves the ‘multiple lens’ referred to above in order to consider both individual experience and institutional experience. Such ideas are explored by Zeeman, Poggenpoel, Myburgh, and Van Der Linde (2002), Packwood and Sikes (2006), Chase (2007), Heikkinen, Huttunen, and Syrjälä (2007), Wren (2011), and Gockel (2012). This is discussed in previous chapters six to nine. Much of this research originates within the qualitative setting, and within psychological approaches to research in education, but it does involve and enhance the quantitative.

In this context the quantitative basis involves an investigation of the data generated by the questionnaire (Francis, 2010; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). The qualitative engages in conversation with the dialogical partners and involves a use of narrative in the form of report and discussion (Benefiel, 2003, 2005; Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006). Here the narrative of the school's involvement in the transcendental domain, as well as the empirical evidence from the questionnaire provide an important insight beneath the surface of the life of the school.

The narrative approach adopted here requires a discussion of the data generated in the quantitative context by the spiritual health questionnaire. It does so in relation to two areas. The first approach is that of the data in comparison with similar data from other research (Francis & Robbins, 2005, Francis, Penny, & Baker, 2012). The second looks at the data generated in the context of the school, engaging with the four dialogical partners mentioned in chapter six. In both cases, there is an awareness of the usefulness of this to school leadership. The usefulness is secured in the ability of this fusion of research styles to provide evidence of the indicators highlighted by Bragg and Manchester (2011) when considering ethos and wellbeing.

### **The use of narrative in the chapter**

The narrative approach as applied to quantitative research uses the link between words and number in order to give a comprehensive view of the data (Franzosi, 2009). In Elliott (2005) there is a practical discussion of combining the use of the quantitative and the qualitative. In Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) there is an example of such

combined operationalism. The present writer is aware that the use of narrative as a means of report and comment is more easily accommodated with the qualitative tradition, but given the examples above, does have a confidence in its usefulness in this setting. This is in keeping with the OfSTED inspection questioning and the indicators of Bragg and Manchester (2011).

### **The procedure of the chapter**

The chapter will involve the following procedure. There will be a threefold approach to considering the transcendental domain within School X. Firstly, this will involve a consideration of what indicators there might be to provide an insight into the concept of ethos. The second aspect of the exploration will be to see what information and judgement can be gained from an involvement with the four dialogical partners. The third area will be to consider School X's data from the questionnaire. This will involve considering the operation of the data in different settings. Finally, these three areas will lead to a summary. This summary will contrast the qualitative views of the dialogical partners with that of the quantitative data.

### **The application of the concept of 'ethos' to the in transcendental domain in the context of this research**

In a consideration of the transcendental domain, ethos is an important indicator to a pupils' reality. Fisher (2016) highlights the importance of this domain for the individual and the communal. With the influence of Fisher (1999, 2009a, 2016), there are comparable views expressed by Francis and Robbins (2005). In a similar fashion one

finds this theme developed in Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017). West-Burnham and Jones (2008) stress the importance of the development of the spiritual, or transcendental aspects of a pupils' being as integral to education. West-Burnham (2002) argues that this is a necessary concern of school leadership.

In keeping with the pattern set with the previous three domains, Table 10: 1 provides a focus for a consideration of this area. The primary focus is the description of the domain found in Francis and Robbins (2005), but also makes use of the points highlighted by Bragg and Manchester (2011). Table 10: 1 shows the nature of the questions that researchers, or a school's leadership team could be asking in these areas.

The aim of this chapter is to establish an insight on the basis of both quantitative and qualitative data to inform views and discussion in relation to the aspects of school life that indicate the nature of the institution. As such each question relates to an aspect of the personal domain and of Bragg and Manchester's (2011) indicators.

This domain concerns issues of some depth, and issues on which the other stakeholders in the community, staff and parents, may have strong views. Issues relating to the existence of God, to the question of whether or not there is life after death illicit strong opinions. This in and of itself, means that schools should take such questions seriously, allowing pupils a safe environment in which to deal with the challenges and opportunities offered in this domain. Pupils should be able to take part in discussion, or

not, but within a culture that allows the formation of a critical and reasonable awareness of such matters.

Table 10:1 - To show the relation between the transcendental domain and the approach to ethos using indicators

Transcendental Domain of Spiritual Health	Discussion with the concept of 'Ethos' – 'indicators' of debate, relating to Bragg and Manchester, (2011, p.1 & 2) – <i>referred to in italics.</i>
<p>This is the domain that</p> <p>“ is concerned with relationships with those aspects of life which transcend the ordinary everyday account of the physical environment ... (which) embraces matters of ultimate concern, cosmic forces, transpersonal phenomena, and ... God.”</p> <p>(Francis &amp; Robbins, 2005; p. 35)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the values of the school enhance discussion and expression in this domain? <i>(Values and vision)</i></li> <li>• Do the official and unofficial aspects of school life offer useful data concerning the pupil's engagement with such matters? <i>(Official and unofficial views of school)</i></li> <li>• Is there evidence that the relationships within the school allow for positive expression of this domain? <i>(Relationships and interaction)</i></li> <li>• Does the 'feel' of the school suggest that such matters are considered to be important? <i>(The evident but hard to articulate)</i></li> <li>• Is it possible to form a judgement of the material and social environment that reflects the transcendental? <i>(Expression of material and social facets of ethos)</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the delivery of SMSC allow pupils to negotiate this area? <i>(Systems of negotiation or imposition)</i></li> <li>• To what extent can it be said that a positive environment, or otherwise, integrates these issues into the learning experience? <i>(Effectiveness and learning)</i></li> </ul>
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In terms of the ethos of the school (Bragg & Manchester, 2011), what is found in this section deals more with the implicit and the existential, rather than the explicit or ritual aspects of the school. In this setting there is a centrality within the school's ethos in both the formal and informal curriculum, both within the classroom and within the extra-curricular provision.

### **The dialogical consideration of the transcendental domain**

In considering the health of School X in this domain, the dialogue between the four documents already mentioned, and the results from the spiritual health questionnaire now begins.

**The first dialogical partner: The School's 'SEF' (School Evaluation form)  
comments about the transcendental domain**

Here the school's Pupil Welfare Committee, in working on this aspect of the SEF, sought to evidence a view of spiritual development that moved beyond the (merely) curious to involve pupils in deeply considered reflection. It was the hope that this encouraged clear personal values while enabling them to be open to new ideas and that this included the transcendental. Much of the evidence already cited in relation to the previous domains could also be usefully mentioned in this context. This evidence would form more of a general background. There is mention of actual examples used in the SEF in order to highlight the reality that the school did. By using its systems in such areas as assemblies, the teaching of Religious Studies and PSHE, the school looked to enhance this domain. The SEF boasted that there was an impressive integration of differing cultures and races, involving an on-going celebration of cultures within the school life – Europe and beyond.

The examples given to indicate the praxis of this involved a prayer room for use by different religious groups; a Remembrance Service, with Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, Christian and Sikh prayers. One assembly noted involved Sikh drummers performing; an occasion where the School captain read from The Koran (and then, in a spontaneous act, presented a visiting dignitary with a copy). Evidence of a systemic equality is suggested in the choice of the School Captains, selected through merit and popularity; in last five years the selection process has appointed a Jew, a Christian, a Sikh, a Muslim and a Hindu. Where the SEF highlighted negative aspects relating to this domain, it involves those poor attitudes in society that every school may encounter.

Once again, and in keeping with the other three domains, this report is comfortably positive. In the same manner, this provides a useful comparison to the returns from the SHQ. The challenge comes in terms of seeing how free pupils feel to engage with these issues beyond the systemic ethos, good as it may be, and relate this to their own existential experience.

### **The second dialogical partner: The OfSTED report (2013) comments about the transcendental domain**

It is important to realise that for OfSTED to deliver an outstanding judgement in relation to SMSC there has to be a culture in the life of the school that fosters a development that underpins all the school's curriculum and teaching. This has to be coherent and systematic, but also has to allow for a freedom of expression. This has to allow the individuality and critical openness that Tirri and Kuusisto (2013) argue are vital to the development of able pupils. While OfSTED may not (indeed often do not), judge the transcendental domain, they do judge the ethos that would foster a healthy approach to the areas of this domain. Hence the following quote is useful,

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well through both the formal and informal curriculum. (School X/ OFSTED, 2013, p. 6)

This may seem like faint praise but the usefulness of this observation is that it evidences the culture required to encourage health in this domain, but it does not reflect on the depth of this culture's effect. Given that the school under inspection did not have a particular religious definition, this comment becomes stronger.

**The third dialogical partner: The ‘Good Schools Guide’ (Hilpern, 2014) comments about the transcendental domain**

The Good School’s Guide does not address the domain that the SHQ refers to as the ‘Transcendental.’ The brief of the report offered in the Guide is such that, at least in the case of this entry, this is not an issue. (At least, this is not the issue in a school without a particular religious affiliation.) There is no comment on belief in God, or horoscopes, or life after death among those taking the questionnaire, or more generally within the School. The evidence offered in the report in general suggests a healthy ethos that would allow such matters to be discussed and acted upon. Once again, the evidence from the returns will inform judgements here.

At this point it is worth noting that Fisher (2014) argues that a relating to God is an important aspect of spiritual well-being, although he recognises that this is a contentious issue. Given the debate Fisher refers to, and given the non-religious designation of School X, it is worthwhile considering the transcendental domain as dealing with the broader issues of spiritual well-being. Again, this guide does not enter into discussion of this aspect of education.

**The fourth dialogical partner: The School's Student Council comments concerning the transcendental Domain in 2014**

In this case, the concept was explained to the group, but no individual question was posed. Instead the group was given a blank sheet of paper on which to write their comments. (One could argue that this approach, in and of itself, is a form of questioning.) Those involved in this group chose to list what they saw as positive and did not take matters beyond this.

The group felt the following examples allowed them to evidence the transcendental domain. It was agreed that the school benefited from being a community of different ethnic backgrounds, with this encouraging an awareness of this domain that was seen in open and inquisitive mind-sets. A particular area highlighted here involved the exposure to the World's religions from Y7 and beyond, through the diversity of the RS curriculum. This was also enhanced by the religious input from major religions into School's major calendar events, i.e. prayers from different religions in the annual Remembrance service. The group drew particular attention to the existence of, and the use of the Prayer room. This was noted to be used by different religious groups within the school, and by a range of individuals for any number of reasons. Within the discussion of this domain at the Council, there was little debate about particular issues, such as life after death or horoscopes, but a more general concern with the importance of there being space provided for 'a general spiritual well-being.' (It is unfortunate that time did not allow for this concept to be explored in more than passing detail.)

### **The Spiritual Health Questionnaire returns for the transcendental domain**

The approach adopted here is similar to the previous chapters. The aim at this point is to consider the data generated by the questionnaire, while using this to explore a greater depth of the returns. Initially the comparison involves data from two other sources. The first is from Francis and Robbins (2005) concept of the 'Overall health Check'. The second concerns a similar comparison with schools that have a secular and not religious character by Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012).

After the outline above considering the four dialogical partners, it is now necessary to view the material from the use of the spiritual health questionnaire, both within the school and in more general settings. (The further 'settings' being the 'Overall Health Check' from 2005 and the work undertaken involving schools without a religious character in 2012.) Following this comparison there is a consideration of three other aspects of data. These are a view of the overall return from School X for both cohorts, 2012 and 2014; an assessment of the data from 2012 and 2014; and finally, a look at the data generated by the Year groups combining both cohorts.

This domain considers those aspects of life that transcend their ordinary physical environment. The domain explores how young people relate to this aspect of their being. Again, Francis and Robbins bring a high degree of clarity to this domain when they write:

The transcendental domain embraces matters of ultimate concern, cosmic forces, transpersonal phenomena, and (in traditional theistic categories,) God.

Good spiritual health in a transcendental domain is reflected in a life enhancing rather than life-diminishing view of relationships with whatever it is conceived as existing beyond the human level, whether this is expressed in terms of a personal God, in terms of an impersonal life force, or in terms of the unpredictable power of luck or fate. (Francis & Robbins, 2005, p. 35).

In this sense, the researcher looks for evidence of that which is life-enhancing rather than life-diminishing. The key issue is how this is expressed beyond the human level. The definitions of the transcendental that are offered are broad, but do not extend beyond the religious definitions of God, life after death and prayer. This is of interest since it is possible for issues relating to ultimate concerns to be non-religious, or non-theistic. In both the work of Fisher and Francis a group that is missing from their research is the Buddhist community, who might well feel that this domain is difficult for them to deal with. The same might be said of atheistic communities and individuals. These points are raised here for the reason that the School X return would indicate a concerned and healthy community, but not one that is ‘traditionally’ transcendental.

### **The study at school X and other studies**

When one looks outside of the denominational schools, the traditional facets of religiously do not figure as strongly as those with a denominational basis. This is evidenced in Table 10: 2. Hence it would be wrong to describe other non-denominational schools in this traditional sense. Given the foundation of these institutions, this observation comes as no surprise. What is evident from the table below is that there is a mix of views and one’s interpretation depends on one’s starting point. While in the 2012 survey 51% declared that they had no belief in God, and 46% of School X followed suit, one might wish to consider the colloquialism of whether the

glass was half full or half empty. Further evidence can be gleaned from the contradiction that more people appear to believe in the benefit of prayer than actually believe in God. Equally between 30 -40% feel that the church is irrelevant, but there are similar figures for its relevance. What is apparent is that 'folk religion' in the form of horoscopes and fortune telling is rejected by young people. It might be useful to explore what is perceived by the term 'horoscope' and 'fortune teller'. It would be of use to know whether the respondents made a judgement to distinguish the popular aspects of such beliefs, with say, the more serious emphasis placed in both ancient and modern forms of Hinduism.

It is noteworthy that, given the scepticism about the existence of God, and the afterlife a number still believe that it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead, between 23% and 31%. The presentation of a range of results over a period of time makes for thought-provoking reading.

It is important to note that these are not issues of irrelevance, but issues that seem to illicit consideration and impact daily life, and therefore matter to school leadership.

Table 10:2 – To show results of the use of the SHQ in three settings, allowing comparison with the transcendental

Transcendental domain	'Overall health Check' 2005			'Schools without a religious character' 20012			School X: 'Gifted and Talented cohort' 2012-14		
	Yes %	Don't Know %	No %	Yes %	Don't Know %	No %	Yes %	Don't know %	No %
I believe in God	43	32	25	22	27	51	33	21	46
I believe in life after death	45	38	17	36	36	28	35	35	30
The church seems irrelevant to life today	27	45	28	32	40	28	39	30	31
I believe in my horoscope	35	29	36	28	31	41	5	24	71
I believe fortune tellers can tell the truth	20	30	50	13	29	58	6	19	75
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	31	32	37	23	31	46	31	24	45
Prayer helps me a lot *	X	X	X	12	24	64	21	23	56

\* This question in 2005 concerned with the relevance of the Bible.

### The overall school X Return: 2012 – 2014

There is little to add to the actual school X results concerning the transcendental that has not already been considered in the previous section. Table 10: 3 shows that the trends and questions arising in society as a whole, occur when observing non-denominational school from 2005 to 2014 seem to be the same at school X as elsewhere.

However, while in all of the four domains one's own persuasion about matters is important, Table 10: 3 suggests the transcendental seems to be more so. Does the individual wish to view belief in God as a positive or a negative, or as an irrelevance? Is the rejection of the folk aspects of religion laudable or an example of closed minds? How does the fact that one in five believe that one can contact the dead relate to the above? This is where it would be useful to place these considerations into the context of each individual participating school.

Table 10:3 - To compare the results in the transcendental domain across the years 2012 – 14 in School X

Transcendental domain	School X: 'Gifted and Talented cohort' - 2012-14		
	Yes %	? %	No %
I believe in God	33	21	49
I believe in life after death	35	35	30
The church seems irrelevant to life today	39	30	31
I believe in my horoscope	5	24	71
I believe fortune tellers can tell the truth	6	19	75
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	31	24	45
Prayer helps me a lot *	21	23	56

\* This question in 2005 concerned with the relevance of the Bible.

In considering the context of a school it would also be interesting to use Fisher's work on teacher attitudes to spiritual health (1998) as a means of gaining a fuller picture and of informing the discussion. This would link to the transcendental life of a school, considering how lessons, particularly RS lessons, assemblies and other such aspects of school life effect the beliefs of young people.

Equally, the broader setting of religious observance is interesting. For example, in considering young people's views of the irrelevance of the church, does this depend on the individual churches in the area that the pupil comes from? Would one expect a more positive response in a suburban area with a greater diversity of churches? (The majority of churches with significant youth ministries appear to be in suburban contexts.)

#### **The school X returns 2012 and 2014**

Table 10: 4 highlights that here is a degree of consistency in both returns when it comes to the rejection of 'folk' religion. However, what is significant is the change in response to transcendental issues relating to belief in God, life after death and prayer. The same is true of the belief about the relevance of the church, but this may be more of a reference to a social situation rather than a transcendental entity.

Table 10:4 - To compare the results relating to the transcendental domain  
across the samples at School X: 2012 and 2014

Transcendental domain	2012 %	2014 %
I believe in God	40	25
I believe in life after death	39	32
The church seems irrelevant to life today	41	36
I believe in my horoscope	4	7
I believe fortune-tellers can tell the future	6	7
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	8	9
Prayer helps me a lot	25	16

The fall of belief in a statement about God from 40% to 25% across two academic years is remarkable. It would be difficult to suggest external societal factors that might account for this. Rather an internal discussion within the school might give greater clarity. It is difficult to draw any clear conclusions from this return when one considers how it might contribute to the individual's, and the year group's spiritual health. One contributing factor might be the seeming failure of local churches to penetrate the local youth culture, but this would be likely to be only one part of a more complex matrix.

### **The school X return by Year Group**

In this area, as shown in Table 10:5, there is not the divergence seen above. As such, there is a greater uniformity of answers across the Year groups with no great difference in responses. The individual's belief in God stays about a third of the respondents

answering positively. Yet where results do change, there is a downward trend. This suggests an area for further investigation and provides an example of the efficacy of the operation of the questionnaire.

Table 10:5 - To show the difference in data concerning the transcendental domain between Year groups at School X		
Transcendental domain	Y9	Y10
I believe in God	33	34
I believe in life after death	36	35
The church seems irrelevant to life today	40	37
I believe in my horoscope	4	7
I believe fortune-tellers can tell the future	6	7
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	8	8
Prayer helps me a lot	22	19

### **A summary of the data from the school health questionnaire involving an evaluation of spiritual health in the transcendental domain**

In the process undertaken in this chapter, the main findings of the four dialogical attempts at appraisal are viewed in the light of the concept of Spiritual health and of ethos and compared with the data generated by the SHQ. It is evident from the School's perspective that it places a significant value on the whole area of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, and within this the issues of ultimate concerns relating to the transcendental domain. The SEF (SMSC) (2013) puts forward a vision that is life

enhancing rather than diminishing. It also offers evidence of the values that drive the community of the school and (hopefully) enhance the educative process.

One example of this is to be found in the school's use of assemblies. The student council valued the manner in which those of different faith communities, and none, were included in such whole-school events as the remembrance assembly. The student council also spoke positively about the religious education delivered within the school. The Religious Studies department, it was noted, delivered a broad and positively provocative curriculum. It was felt that this enhanced the students' understanding of the transcendental. In reaching a positive judgement, OfSTED spoke of a culture that encouraged pupils to explore such matters within both the formal and informal life of the school.

The basis for this is the open approach to spirituality mentioned in such occasions as the remembrance service. In this the school can be said to be dealing well with beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life. This extends to a young person's interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values. The enjoyment of assemblies involving a multi-cultural celebration is evidence of such interest and respect.

The picture of the transcendental domain that emerges from the SHQ is broadly similar to the results from other schools 'without a religious character', although the school X cohort would appear to be less believing in horoscopes, fortune tellers or the ability to

contact the spirits of the dead. As such there is a disassociation from folk religiosity within the returns. What the SHQ does not show is the validity given to the form, or traditional, use of religiosity within the systems of the school. This is not surprising since the SHQ does not have particular statements relating to this domain that would discover this. In order to gain a fuller picture of this, one would need to explore two further areas. The first would require a reading back into the view offered from all four domains, which offer a holistic set of data in this respect. Secondly, one would need to explore whether or not the Christian background of the SHQ (Fisher, 1998) had any impact on the student's response. The work undertaken by Francis and Robbins (2005) suggest that this latter point will not have a significant impact, but, on this basis, this is an issue worth returning to consider a decade or so later.

One final area needs mention at this point. It has become clear, in viewing the returns in the other domains, that there was a divergence between how the school worked for the majority, and then how it educates the less content minority. When considering the transcendental domain, it is harder to see such a pattern. One could argue that a (healthy) scepticism is apparent. In reviewing the overall return from 2012 - 2014 the present researcher did question whether or not individual respondents viewed a belief in God as positive or negative, and whether or not this had an effect on how such statement was dealt with. This is, again, an example of the SHQ uncovering room for further investigation, in that this would engage in a journey deeper into the religiosity, or spirituality of the school. Regardless of what might need exploration in the future, the returns from the SHQ for this domain relate well to the appraisal conducted elsewhere.

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## **Chapter 11: Conclusion: Spiritual health, school leadership and the SHQ**

### **Introduction: Within this dissertation, a consideration of leadership and spiritual health**

The purpose of this final chapter is to engage in an evaluation of the operation of spiritual health questionnaire with a view to informing school leadership. A number of commentators agree that there is a strong argument for the spirituality and spiritual health of young people to be considered as an essential aspect of the experience of education (Fisher, 1998, 2009a, 2011a; Grace, 2000; Johnson, McCreery, & Castelli, 2000; Fullan, 2002; West-Burnham, 2002; Dantley, 2003; Vialle, Walton, & Woodcock 2008; Fullan, 2002; West-Burnham, 2002; Dantley, 2003; Vialle, Walton, & Woodcock 2008; West-Burnham & Jones, 2008; Francis & Robbins, 2005; Francis, 2010; Morris, 2010; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). In this context the present dissertation there is an exploration of how the SHQ could listen to the student voice, and of how this would be of benefit to school leadership.

This evaluation will involve reflection of how the questionnaire delivers useful quantitative information to help inform school leadership. This will involve consideration of the questionnaire in six distinct, but interrelated areas. The six key areas in this context are:

- i. The usefulness of the SHQ to school leadership.
- ii. The ability of the SHQ to deliver detailed information from School X.
- iii. The extent to which the SHQ delivers information that extends what may be available from other sources.
- iv. The opportunity for further analysis
- v. The challenges the use of the questionnaire faces within the ever-changing dynamic youth culture.

vi. The challenge of electronic delivery

This approach places the use of the spiritual health questionnaire into the heart of both the theory and the practice of a school. At this juncture it is worth repeating Fisher's comment that:

assessing a person's spiritual health is one matter; using the information to help improve quality of life is another. (Fisher, 2009a, p. 65)

In discussing this application, this chapter turns to considering present and future use of the questionnaire.

### **The usefulness of the questionnaire to school leadership**

It is possible to consider beginning this evaluative process with reference to school leadership to be a strange choice. The reality is that the prospect of a school adopting the approach advocated by the questionnaire will eventually succeed, or not, depending on the view of its usefulness taken by those who lead. This is true of whatever aspect of school systems management is involved – curriculum, financial planning or pastoral care.

The ongoing importance of school leadership engaging with these ideas is argued by Johnson, McCreery, and Castelli (2000), Grace (2000), Fullan (2002, 2003), Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, and Kakabadse (2002), West-Burnham (2002), Bush, and Glover, (2003), Dantley, (2003), Flintham (2003, 2009, 2010), Fry (2003), DfE (2004), Dent, Higgins, and Wharff (2005), Hafner & Capper (2005), Hinds (2005), Warren-Smith, (2006a, 2006b), Roffey (2007), West-Burnham and Jones (2008), Perkins, Wellman, and Wellman (2009), Beattie (2010), Bandsuch and Cavanagh (2010),

Klenke, (2010), Pettit, (2010), Robinson & Campbell (2010), Schein (2010), Fry and Cohen (2009), Fite, Reardon, and Boone (2011), Gibson (2011), Weare and Nind, (2011), Ainscow, Banke, Maldonado, and Lacey (2012), Senge (2012), Lumb (2014), Kaya (2015), Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) and Plater (2017). The consensus of such judgements crosses academic disciplines, continents and educational systems. For those involved in leading a school, the application of this judgement is best expressed in the view that there needs to be a fusion between two discussions:

the discourse and understanding of management must be matched by a discourse and understanding of ethics, morality and spirituality. (Grace, 2000, p. 244)

Such an understanding enables a systemic expression of educational activity, such as the planning and delivery of the curriculum, or the pastoral support systems, and the ethos of the school. Karakas (2010) considers this as providing an interconnected community that improves performance and well-being of the individual and the organization. In a similar fashion Robinson and Campbell (2010) express this interconnectedness as being a circular relationship. This is for a school's leadership to provide a dynamic between a clear ethos that makes their values explicit, impacts the delivery of quality teaching, and benefits the whole school community.

This sense of connection is exhibited in school systems that recognise the value of the outcomes. First there is recognition of the concern for the academic progress of pupils (Hargreaves, 1995; Bush & Glover, 2003; Benefiel, 2005; Morris, 2010; Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017). Second this concern for academic progress does not negate the holistic requirements that may benefit the individual and the community. For some this is a consideration of 'Re-souling' (Plater, 2017), in that which goes beyond binary judgements and involves multi-disciplinary investigation. Fullan and Hargreaves

(1996), Bush and Glover (2003), Fry (2003) and Lumb (2007) point out the tensions that this creates for school leaders, but argue that, even allowing for the complexity related to this issue, it still needs to be a priority.

It is worth noting at this point, that the experience of the school leadership in School X engaging with the SHQ has demonstrated the practical benefits of the questionnaire for enabling school leaders to access the student voice in such a way as to inform policy and practice.

### **The ability of the questionnaire to deliver detailed information for School X**

The purpose of this research needs to be seen within the context of particular schools (Littleton & Howe, 2010). This dissertation seeks to see if the spiritual health questionnaire could be reasonably applied in the context of a single sex environment within a school that specialised in educating those considered to be gifted and talented academically. The experience of discussing the findings from the questionnaire in dialogue with four other sources of evidence has demonstrated that the SHQ was appropriate and useful in the context. This finding that the work of Fisher (1998), Francis and Robbins (2005), Francis (2010), Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012), and Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) provide evidence of the flexibility of the instrument. It is important to recognise the external verification of the efficiency of this method found in the work of De Jager Meezenbroek, Garssen, Van den Berg, Van Dierendonck, Visser, and Schaufeli (2010) and Leaver (2009) involving their review of

spirituality questionnaires, and their recommending of the spiritual health questionnaire. This then is a reasonable approach, providing a flexible and powerful tool for school leadership to access the spiritual health of the school and the systems relating to it.

Further to this, there are two other points to raise. Firstly, the context of the research also took notice of the definitions of ‘ethos’ within the sphere of secondary education, particularly bearing Bragg and Manchester (2011) in mind, involving the systemic investigation to evidence the discourse and understanding that Grace (2000) advocates. Secondly, the comparisons made within this work show how the questionnaire provides a useful indicator of spiritual health across a range of schools.

### **Going beyond other available sources of data**

The use of both quantitative data from the SHQ and qualitative observation has enabled the research to review the spiritual health of School X. The two approaches gathered information in different ways and at differing levels. The qualitative approach allowed for a view of the surface material. This material was generated by the school’s own self-assessment regimes and the judgements of OfSTED, as well as the external review carried out by ‘The Good School’s Guide’ (Hilpern, 2014), and the minutes from the school’s Student Council discussing these matters.

Alongside these qualitative data, the quantitative results from the spiritual health questionnaire over the period of the study provided a deeper insight. This enabled a comprehensive student voice, and in so doing went beneath the surface, gathering quantitative evidence in discovering opinions and perceptions, finding reasons and motivations, that are beyond the brief of the inspection, the promotional material and the internal debate. In the generation of the quantitative data, the 'soft' or qualitative definitions of ethos and spiritual well-being find a measurable format. In so doing the comparison with other similar, and not quite so similar schools where the SHQ has been used proved to set a context within which to consider the findings, providing an excellent basis for the discussion of the formal and informal curriculum of a school. The actual justification in relation to this is found in the distinctiveness of the view that emerges.

There is much in chapters Six to Ten that supports this interpretation. However, it is useful to return to one area as an illustration of this point. An example of this, in relation to the points raised above can be seen in the comparison of the data with the school and the OfSTED judgements concerning Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education. Allowing for the risk of repetition, it is useful to restate that in both cases a judgement of 'outstanding' was reached with a degree of confidence. However, the use of the spiritual health questionnaire, while endorsing this view, also highlights areas that require further discussion and action.

An example of that which needs to be highlighted would be the information generated concerning personal worth, depression and suicide in the area of the personal domain.

While the responses from school X are more positive than those from the data included in the 'Overall health check' (Francis & Robbins, 2005) and from other 'Schools without a religious character' (Francis, Penny, & Barker 2012), this cannot be seen as an area for complacency. The reality is that this is a significant issue, hinted at by the Student Council, but not recognised by external inspection or internal review. The significance is not purely on the grounds of personal well-being but must also be recognised as contributing to school effectiveness (Bragg & Manchester, 2011) in that an unhappy student is unlikely to achieve, or to encourage those around them to do so. As such the questionnaire has delivered invaluable information that cannot be ignored.

### **Further analysis**

At a number of places, such as discussing the similarity of returns between Year groups in the various dimensions, it became clear there would be a very real usefulness to apply the SHQ yearly over a period of time. This would enable a school to track changes in the perceptions of the young people they educate towards their own well-being and learning. While this pursuit would be well served by the present SHQ, there would also be a useful development if one could gather further baseline information. This could give clarity on matters relating to rurality and ethnicity. This approach could also give further insight into the perceptions of Day and Boarding pupils. Possibly this could be achieved by changes to the start of the questionnaire.

A key issue, not explored here, but of importance, is that of how teacher attitudes to all four domains of spiritual health inform and shape the views of those whom they teach. This is an area that is bound to influence the ethos of a school. The question is whether

or not the involvement of the staff in their delivery of their academic subjects, and their more general example and involvement within the school enhances or detracts from this concept. A possibility for the future would be to undertake a study finding first the views of the staff in an institution and then comparing their response with those of their pupils. It would be useful to consider using Fisher's (1998) work on teacher attitudes to spiritual health as a way of informing the discussion. In this there is a reflection of 'ideal types' (rationalists, personalists, communalists, environmentalists and globalists) considering how they relate to spiritual well-being. Fisher also explores teachers' views on the assessment of spiritual health and on how the ethos of each school is important in this as well.

### **The Questionnaire and the challenge of changing youth culture**

Over the period of the development and operation of the questionnaire there have been significant changes in the fundamental nature of youth culture. This raises a challenge to the design and operation of the questionnaire. The challenge is based in how best to fashion a questionnaire to meet the changing needs of a given culture (Saler, 2008; Dimock, 2018). There is a recognition that such cultures are neither uniform in their geographical location, nor their values and world views, or even their basic definition (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Barna, 2001; Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007; Dimock, 2018; Kinnaman, 2018). The changing youth culture is expressed in a culture that exhibits eclectic lifestyles, nonlinear thinking styles, a fluidity of relationships, a 'cut and paste' sense of spirituality, an open mindedness and a technologically-fueled set of expectations. This is described as a mosaic (Barna, 2001), differing from previous generations because of the influence of post-modernism and of technology. The pupils

at School X who took part in the questionnaire belong to that group classed as being on the border between generation 'Y' (McCrindle, 2003) and generation 'Z' (Turner, 2015; Williams, 2015) inhabiting a social diversity unknown to previous generations. The complexity of this situation, involving fluid philosophies, greater freedoms and technological opportunities, are highlighted by de Souza (2009b, 2014), Yust, Hyde, and Ota (2010) and Hyde, Ota, and Yust (2012). Within this understanding of cultures and technologies there is the view that, by their very nature:

constructions of childhood are complex. They require multidisciplinary perspectives and need to take account of the psychological, physiological, biological and social factors. (Hyde, Yust, & Ota, 2010, p 1)

In this there is a similarity to Platter's (2016) concept of re-souling to consider the complexity.

Even in the culture of ambiguity, Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson, and Zinnbauer (2000) stress the need to have a method that is precise enough to allow for a quantitative investigation, but not restrictive in its definition of the characteristics and constructs of what spiritual well-being is defined as by a generation. Allowing for the complexity such papers are clear that there is a need to engage, to strive towards an interconnectedness (de Souza, 2009b, 2014). Within such an approach there is Chase's (2007) 'multiple lens' which formed a part of the investigation in chapters six to ten. The present author argues for the spiritual health questionnaire, in an evolving format, being an essential tool in this endeavour, providing a quantitative basis for exploration and connection in this complexity.

The challenge represented here is best viewed in terms of origins and operation. The origins of the spiritual health questionnaire in its present format, as operationalised by Fisher and Francis, exhibit the design of the modernist period and there is the question as to whether or not it is still effective in a post-modern environment. The work in School X shows that the questionnaire is still effective.

In this context the question that arises is twofold. Firstly, could the SHQ be adapted to enable a greater precision in terms of post-modern views of spirituality. Secondly, should the actual writing of the questionnaire evolve to include those who will be answering its questions. There is a cultural issue here in that there is a case for a more refined questionnaire, still based on Fisher (1998), that is not written by one generation for another. This is an extension of Francis' early work (1982, 1984a, 1984b, 2001). It is also seen in a different context in Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017). This approach seeks for the questionnaire to be further refined with those who will provide the data involved in the adaption of the questionnaire. As such the view here is to see culture as a 'lens' rather than a 'label' (Chase, 2007), as a means of seeing how best to fashion the questions, as well as to operationalise the answers. This approach has been successfully trailed in a multidimensional endeavor by Michaelson, Brooks, Jirasek, Brooks, Whitehead, King, Walsh, Mazur, and Pickett (2016) in a study of spiritual health across six countries. This project had the support of the HSBC Child Spirituality group. A similar approach is to be found in Brooks, Michaelson, King, Inchley, and Pickett (2018). Both these works indicate the movement in developing the concept. As such, development is possible within the mosaic of post-modernism and can be precise. Turner (2015) sees such cultural and technological innovation as being an important

aspect of an ongoing engagement. This will enable the consideration that Francis (2010) believes such quantitative information requires.

### **The challenge of electronic delivery of the questionnaire**

The issue of accessibility relates to the matters of origin referred to in the previous section, but with the focus being on the operative use of the questionnaire. In a changing world there is a case for suggesting that the SHQ needs technological development. The present spiritual health questionnaire, as used in School X, is not technologically developed. The process involved pupils completing paper copies of the questionnaire collated by their teachers. These were then collected by those involved in the project and taken away to be processed. The results were then returned to the school. This is a slow and unwieldy process and one that needs to be reviewed for a greater ease of use.

In an age when most on-line questionnaires return the collected data quickly, the spiritual health questionnaire needs to serve its participants in a similar manner. The research being carried out by Michaelson et al (2016) in Toronto, by Brooks, Michaelson, King, Inchley and Pickett (2018), and the Scottish researchers Levin, Inchley, Currie, & Currie (2012) is progressing with such a delivery. The present process of dealing with the data needs to be modernized if it is to serve schools and researchers in the most accessible manner. Given the strength of this questionnaire as a tool for schools, this would seem to be a worthwhile investment. Such results would inform school leaders and inspectors of the deeper issues from the student perspective.

### **A concluding evaluation**

It is the conviction of the present writer that the use of the Spiritual Health Questionnaire in this context has proved to be both effective and informative. It allows for a researcher, practicing teacher, or school leader to look at the issue of spiritual health, in whatever context, with a degree of depth not easily achieved elsewhere. It allows those involved in school leadership to efficiently observe the praxis of the school from differing perspectives. The efficacy is based upon the usefulness in gathering a detailed insight into the pupils' belief structure and world view, which in turn can be compared with other more comprehensive studies. This approach enables the use of quantitative data to inform the mixed methods approach required by OfSTED.

The first conclusion is that the questionnaire can be used to provide a clear understanding of spiritual health and to offer accessible quantitative data providing a useful insight for school leaders. This data provided by the questionnaire enables a 'check' that requires school leaders to plan to deliver systems that meet the needs of pupils. This involves both seeking to strengthen areas of concern In School X, involving such aspects as how best to support those who lack self-worth, but also building upon the positive elements, such as the sense of belonging.

The second conclusion is that the SHQ can be further developed to meet the needs of pupils in the fluidity of the post-modern area. The changing nature of the questionnaires design and operation, from Fisher (1998) through to Francis and Robbins (2005) and to

Michaelson, Brooks, Jirasek, Brooks, Whitehead, King, Walsh, Mazur and Pickett (2016) provides evidence of a flexibility in this respect. This is of benefit to all concerned, both school communities as well as academic researchers.

Finally, it is worth reiterating the view that the questionnaire is a vital tool for use in schools. It is a quantitative basis for the discourse that is essential if a school's leadership are to formulate an understanding of leadership and of management that fuses with an understanding of ethics, morality and spirituality (Grace, 2000). The investigation by Casson, Cooling, and Francis (2017) shows that this is possible.

While the work here relates to the secondary sector and does not allow for a comment relating to other sectors, the evidence suggests that the usefulness of the detail and operation of the approach would be worth considering in both the primary and post-16 educations. This might possibly allow for a body of evidence being collated for each individual within the system, as well as for cohorts. Such a data base could be used not just in inspection, but also in a proactive and predictive manner, in order to further the spiritual wellbeing of those in institutions of education.

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