Liverpool's Revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Liverpool's S.A.C.R.E. · Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

The City of Liverpool

Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction by Councillor GIDEON BEN-TOVIM

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Liverpool's Revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which replaces the Syllabus adopted in 2002. As Chair I have had the privilege of working with members of SACRE, the Agreed Syllabus Conference and a team of dedicated teachers who have spent many hours of concentrated deliberation and discussion on the task.

Our team of experts have taken full consideration of the guidance given in **Religious Education: The non-statutory national framework**, produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in 2004, and this has enabled them to incorporate the most recent and relevant advice and research. It is our intention to extend this supportive partnership working into the production of further practical guidance for teachers and appropriate training for colleagues, in the mutual support and development of the best religious education for the pupils in our schools.

It is the sincere desire of SACRE that religious education would promote an enquiring approach in which pupils may carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religion. At the heart of the Agreed Syllabus is a focus on ultimate questions and ethical issues. This focus enables pupils to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures and how these impact on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.

We have included supportive materials in the form of a CD-ROM with a suggested scheme of work that follows a thematic approach and contains mind-friendly lessons enabling access for all pupils.

I am grateful to all members of the working group and in particular to Marian Shaw and Dot Bygroves who have worked enthusiastically and tirelessly on this review over the last two years. I am confident that the Revised Agreed Syllabus 2008 will enable our young people the opportunity to enjoy and to benefit from religious education in City of Liverpool.

Gideon Ben-Tovim

The Liverpool Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Every pupil in a maintained school in Liverpool has a statutory entitlement to religious education. This Agreed Syllabus has been produced to support those with responsibility for the provision and quality of religious education in maintained schools. It lies at the heart of our commitment to raise standards in the learning and teaching of religious education. It sets attainment targets for learning.

It aims to give a clear and shared understanding of the knowledge and skills that young people will gain at school. It allows schools to meet the individual learning needs of pupils and develop a distinctive character and ethos, rooted in their local community. It also provides a framework within which all partners in education can support young people on the road to further learning.

An entitlement to religious education must be an entitlement for all pupils, regardless of their faith or belief. This syllabus makes clear the principles that schools should follow in the teaching of religious education, to ensure that all pupils have the chance to succeed, whatever their individual needs or the potential barriers to their learning may be.

Equality of opportunity is part of the broad set of common values and purposes that underpin the school curriculum and the work of schools. These also include a commitment to valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the environment in which we live and the diversity in our society. Pupils need to understand, therefore, the role and significance of religion in the modern world and the important beliefs and values that shape it.

Religious education plays an important role alongside other aspects of the curriculum and school life, in helping pupils to engage with challenging spiritual, moral and social questions that arise in their lives and in society.

The legal position

Religious education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools, including those in the sixth form, except to those withdrawn by their parents. This requirement does not apply to nursery classes in maintained schools.

Religious education is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum. In all maintained schools, other than voluntary aided schools with a religious character, it must be taught according to a locally agreed syllabus.

The attainment levels set out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages. The Education Act 1996 states that an agreed syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

About religious education in the curriculum

The contribution of religious education to the school curriculum

Supporting the values of the curriculum

Religious education actively promotes the values of truth, justice, respect for all and care of the environment. It places specific emphasis on:
- pupils valuing themselves and others
- the role of family and the community in religious belief and activity
- the celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences
- sustainable development of the earth.

Religious education also recognises the changing nature of society, including changes in religious practice and expression, and the influence of religion in the local, national and global community.

Supporting the aims of the curriculum

Aim 1: The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.

Religious education should be a stimulating, interesting and enjoyable subject. **The knowledge, skills and understanding** outlined in the Agreed Syllabus are designed to promote the best possible progress and attainment for all pupils. Religious education develops independent and interdependent learning. It makes an important contribution to pupils' skills in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT).

Religious education promotes an enquiring approach in which pupils carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religion. It also enhances the capacity to think coherently and consistently. This enables pupils to evaluate thoughtfully their own and others' views in a reasoned and informed manner.

Aim 2: The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

Religious education has a significant role in the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At the heart of the Agreed Syllabus is a focus on ultimate questions and ethical issues. This focus enables pupils to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures and how these impact on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
Religious education seeks to develop pupils' awareness of themselves and others.

The Agreed Syllabus aims to promote religious understanding, discernment and respect and challenge prejudice and stereotyping. Religious education is committed to exploring the significance of the environment, both locally and globally, and the role of human beings and other species within it. A central concern of religious education is the promotion of each pupil's self-worth. A sense of self-worth helps pupils to reflect on their uniqueness as human beings, share their feelings and emotions with others and appreciate the importance of forming and maintaining positive relationships.

The structure of the Liverpool agreed syllabus

The Agreed Syllabus

The Agreed Syllabus sets out what pupils should study in religious education from the ages of 3 to 19. It is organised in three sections for pupils of different ages:
- foundation stage
- key stages 1, 2 and 3
- ages 14–19.

The foundation stage (ages 3–5)

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (QCA, 2000) sets out expectations of what pupils should learn to meet the early learning goals. The Agreed Syllabus describes how religious education can contribute to the early learning goals and provides examples of religious education-related activities.

Key stages 1, 2 and 3 (ages 5–14)

The Agreed Syllabus follows the same format as the National Curriculum programmes of study with sections on knowledge, skills and understanding and breadth of study.

Ages 14–19

This Agreed Syllabus sets out an entitlement for all students to study religious education and to have their learning accredited.

Schools should plan for continuity of provision of religious education that is progressive and rigorous from key stage 3 for all students. Schools can make this possible by providing access to discrete courses or units leading to qualifications that meet legal requirements regarding the study of Christianity, and/or other principal religions, and/or other beliefs, world views or philosophies, within the context of a pluralistic society.

All courses should provide opportunities within and beyond school for learning that involves first-hand experiences and activities involving people, places and events (for example the local area, places of worship and community activities, public meetings, and places of employment, education, training or recreation). Students will have different experiences of religious education according to the courses chosen.

To make sure the legal requirements are met and the curriculum is broad and balanced:
- Christianity should be studied throughout each key stage

- the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (here regarded as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) should be studied across the key stages. It is important that schools ensure that by the end of key stage 3 pupils have encountered all of these five principal religions in sufficient depth.

It is also essential that religious education enables pupils to share their own beliefs, viewpoints and ideas without embarrassment or ridicule. Many pupils come from religious backgrounds but others have no attachment to religious beliefs and practices.

Pupils should also study how religions relate to each other, recognising both similarities and differences within and between religions. They should be encouraged to reflect on:
- the significance of interfaith dialogue
- the important contribution religion can make to community cohesion and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

The knowledge, skills and understanding identify the key aspects of learning in religious education. These are described as 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'.

Attainment Target 1

Learning about religion includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues. In the Agreed Syllabus, learning about religion covers pupils' knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion.

Attainment Target 2

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion. Pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments.

Knowledge, skills and understanding at KS1

AT1 Learning ABOUT religion

a) **explore** a range of **religious stories** and sacred writings and talk about their **meanings**

b) name and **explore** a range of **celebrations, worship** and rituals in religion, noting similarities where appropriate

c) **identify** the **importance**, for some people, of **belonging** to a religion and recognise the difference this makes to their lives

d) **explore how** religious **beliefs** and ideas can be **expressed** through the **arts** and communicate their responses

e) **identify** and suggest meanings for religious symbols and begin to use a range of **religious words**

Knowledge, skills and understanding at KS1

AT2 Learning FROM religion

a) **reflect on** and consider religious and **spiritual feelings, experiences** and **concepts** such as worship, wonder, praise, thanks, concern, joy and sadness

b) ask and **respond** imaginatively **to puzzling questions**, communicating their ideas

c) **identify and communicate what is important** to them and others, including those with religious commitments

d) **reflect** on how **spiritual and moral values** relate to their own behaviour

e) **recognise** that **religious teachings** and ideas **make a difference** to individuals, families and the local community

Knowledge, skills and understanding KS2

AT1 Learning ABOUT religion

a) **describe** the **key aspects of religions,** especially the **people, stories** and **traditions** that influence the beliefs and values of others

b) **describe** the **variety of practices** and ways of life in religions and understand **how** these stem from, and are closely **connected with, beliefs** and teachings

c) **identify** and **begin to describe** the **similarities** and **differences within** and **between religions**

d) **investigate** the **significance of religion** in the local, national and global **communities**

e) **consider** the meaning of a **range of forms of religious expression**, understand why they are important in religion and note links between them

f) **describe** and **begin to understand** religious and other **responses to ultimate** and ethical **questions**

g) **use specialist vocabulary** in communicating their knowledge and understanding

h) **use** and **interpret information** about religions from a range of sources

Knowledge, skills and understanding KS2

AT2 Learning FROM religion

a) **reflect on** what it **means** to **belong to a faith community**, communicating their own and others' responses

b) **respond to** the **challenges of commitment** both in their own lives and within religious traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion is shown in a variety of ways

c) **discuss** their own and others' **views of religious truth and belief**, expressing their own ideas

d) **reflect on ideas of right and wrong** and their own and others' responses to them

e) **reflect on sources of inspiration** in their own and others' lives

Knowledge, skills and understanding at KS3

AT1 Learning ABOUT religion

a) **investigate** and **explain** the differing **impacts of religious beliefs** and teachings on individuals, communities and societies

b) **analyse** and **explain how** religious **beliefs** and ideas are **transmitted** by people, texts and traditions

c) **investigate** and **explain why people belong** to faith communities and **explain** the reasons for **diversity** in religion

d) **analyse** and **compare** the **evidence** and **arguments** used when **considering issues of truth** in religion and philosophy

e) **discuss** and **evaluate** how **religious** beliefs and teachings inform **answers to ultimate questions** and **ethical issues**

f) **apply** a wide range of **religious** and **philosophical vocabulary** consistently and accurately, **recognising** both the **power** and **limitations of language** expressing religious ideas and beliefs

g) **interpret** and **evaluate** a range of **sources**, texts and authorities, from a variety of contexts

h) **interpret** a variety of **forms of religious** and **spiritual expression**

Knowledge, skills and understanding at KS3

AT2 Learning FROM religion

a) **reflect** on the **relationship between beliefs**, teachings and **ultimate questions**, communicating their own ideas and using reasoned arguments

b) **evaluate** the **challenges** and **tensions of belonging to a religion** and the i**mpact of religion** in the **contemporary world**, expressing their own ideas

c) **express insights** into the significance and **value of religion** and the other world views **on human relationships** personally, locally and globally

d) **reflect** and **evaluate** their own and other's **beliefs about world issues** such as peace and conflict, wealth and poverty and the importance of the environment, communicating their own ideas

e) **express** their **own beliefs** and ideas, using a variety of forms of expression

Knowledge, skills and understanding at 14-19

AT1 Learning ABOUT religion

a) **investigate, study and interpret** significant religious, philosophical and ethical issues, including the study of **religious and spiritual experience**, in light of their own sense of identity, experience and commitments

b) **think rigorously and present coherent, widely informed and detailed arguments** about beliefs, ethics, values and issues, drawing **well substantiated conclusions**

c) **develop** their **understanding** of the principal methods by which **religions and spirituality** are studied

d) **draw upon, interpret and evaluate** the rich and varied forms of **creative expression** in religious life

e) **use specialist vocabulary** to **evaluate critically** both the power and limitations of **religious language**

Knowledge, skills and understanding at 14-19

AT2 Learning FROM religion

a) **reflect on, express and justify** their own opinions in light of their learning about religion and their study of **religious, philosophical, moral and spiritual questions**

b) **develop their own values and attitudes** in order to recognise their **rights and responsibilities** in light of their learning about religion

c) **relate their learning** in religious education to the wider world, gaining a **sense of personal autonomy in preparation for adult life**

d) **develop skills** that are useful in a wide range of careers and in adult life generally, especially skills of **critical enquiry, creative problem-solving, and communication in a variety of media**

Breadth of study

The knowledge, skills and understanding are developed through the breadth of study, which has three elements:
- belief
- practice
- opportunities.

Belief

- Key beliefs about the world, humanity and God, about ultimate meaning and purpose, and ethical issues.
- Sources of authority, sacred texts and stories.
- Inspiring figures and religious founders and how they become sources of inspiration and authority.
- How religious meaning is conveyed through a variety of forms: pictures, signs, symbols etc.

Practice

- The establishment of personal identity and of corporate identity by communities, including faith communities, what is expected of a person in following a religion, what religions say about the value of the individual and human rights.
- Where and how people belong, how individuals and communities practice their faith.
- The contribution of faith communities to local life and to global issues.
- What religions say about social justice and citizenship.
- The way in which religion influences ethical principles and moral choices.
- Where, how and why people worship, how worship can take a variety of forms.

Opportunities

Pupils will be given a variety of opportunities to study beliefs and practices.

- Experience – visit places of worship and, where possible, places of major religious significance.
- Communicate – listen and respond to representatives of faith communities share their own beliefs, ideas and values; discuss and evaluate religious, ethical and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others.
- Reflect – use their senses and have times of quiet reflection; consider and reflect upon their own and others' insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning; evaluate these insights using reasoned, balanced arguments.
- Create – use a range of forms of expression (e.g. talking, writing, art, design, music, dance, drama, ICT) to communicate their ideas and responses creatively and thoughtfully.

3) Belief

a) Beliefs

- KS1 What people believe about God, humanity and the natural world

- KS2 How beliefs about God, the world and others impact lives

- KS3 The key ideas and questions of meaning in religions (including issues related to God, truth, the world, human life and life after death)

b) Teachings

- KS1 How and why some stories are sacred and important in religion

- KS2 What sacred texts and other sources say about God, the world and human life

- KS3 Different sources of authority and how they inform believers' lives

c) Figures

- KS1 People who are looked up to in families

- KS2 Founders of religion who inspired others

- KS3 How people who have been inspired by religious founders go on to become great inspirations themselves

d) Symbols

- KS1 How pictures, signs etc, can have special meanings

- KS2 How religious symbols can convey deeper meaning for those who understand them

- KS3 How and why human self-understanding and experiences are expressed in a variety of forms

4) Practice

a) Identity

- KS1 "Who I am and my uniqueness as a person in a family and community"

- KS2 What is expected of a person in following a religion or belief

- KS3 What religions say about the value of the individual and human

b) Relationship

- KS1 Where and how people belong and why belonging is important

- KS2 How religious families and communities practise their faith, and the contributions this makes to local life

- KS3 What religions say about social justice and citizenship

c) Morality

- KS1 Why people (including religious believers) identify some acts as good and others bad

- KS2 What religions mean by 'good and evil'. What reasons, including religious, people might have for doing good or evil

- KS3 Questions and influences that inform ethical and moral choices, including forgiveness. What religions say about global issues

d) Worship

- KS1 How and why celebrations are important in religion

- KS2 Where, how and why people worship, including at particular sites

- KS3 How worship can take a variety of forms and why people choose different ways of revering God

5) Opportunities

a) Experience

- KS1 Visiting places of worship and focusing on symbols and feelings

- KS2 Encountering religion through visitors and visits to places of worship, and focusing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community

- KS3 Encountering people from different religious, cultural and philisophical groups, who can express a range of convictions on religious and ethical issues

b) Communicate

- KS1 Listening and responding to visitors from local faith communities

- KS1 Sharing beliefs, ideas and values and talking about feelings and experiences

- KS2 Discussing religious and philisophical questions, giving reasons for beliefs

- KS3 Discussing, questioning and evaluating important issues in religion and philosophy, including ultimate questions and ethical issues

c) Reflect

- KS1 Using senses and having times of quiet reflection

- KS2 Considering range of human experiences and feelings reflecting on insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning

- KS3 Reflecting on and carefully evaluating values in response to learning in religious education, using reasoned, balanced arguments

d) Create

- KS1 Using art and design , ICT, music, dance and drama to develop creative talents and imagination

- KS2 Expressing and communicating insights through art and design, music, dance, drama and ICT

- KS3 Using a range of forms of expression (such as art and design, music, dance, drama, writing, ICT) to communicate ideas and responses creatively and thoughtfully

RE and Every Child Matters

Enjoy and achieve

Pupils can be enthused and inspired by RE. They enjoy exploring beliefs and practices and gain satisfaction from engaging with issues of meaning and value. Investigating the place and impact of religion in the modern world develops pupils' curiosity and imagination. Encountering and making sense of ideas for the first time allows pupils to enjoy their own search for meaning.

Pupils can respond positively to vigorous debates, to the respectful sharing of beliefs and feelings, and to the discovery of places of worship. They enjoy meeting people of different cultures and beliefs. They can rise to the challenge of understanding texts, expressing ideas and dealing with ultimate questions, celebrating their insights and achievements.

Be healthy

Health can be understood on physical, intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual levels. When pupils explore the impact of practices and ways of life on how people live their lives, they are helped to make informed choices about ideas and lifestyles. Religions and beliefs can be either life-affirming or damaging in their teaching about the human condition. Evaluating both kinds of beliefs can lead pupils to positive and healthy attitudes.

When pupils confront ethical issues such as relationships, drugs, advertising, genetic research or violence, they learn how to make wise decisions, to help or advise others and to understand moral or emotional pressures. By gaining an understanding of ideas such as temptation, desire and emptiness, pupils strengthen their understanding of spiritual and moral perspectives on health and wellbeing.

Stay safe

Young people often wrestle with questions such as 'What can I believe in?' 'Who is a trustworthy friend?' 'Where are the exciting ideas and activities to be found?' 'How do I weigh up the integrity of a person or a group?' RE offers pupils lively opportunities for evaluating the safety of ideas, relationships and practices. By learning about religious and ethical rules governing care of children, respect for friends and neighbours and responsibility for crime, pupils widen their understanding of safe and unsafe situations. By learning from themes such as authority, ethics, relationships, and rights and responsibilities, pupils can deepen their understanding of, and commitment to, safe lifestyle choices.

Make a positive contribution

RE invites pupils to voice their questions and hopes, to engage with major issues affecting their futures and to consider the contributions made by religions and beliefs. RE offers a structured forum for sharing insights and developing an appreciation of different points of view. It encourages pupils to investigate, discuss and build reasoned arguments, giving them experience of dealing with difference respectfully.

By engaging with themes such as justice, authority, interfaith dialogue and the environment through local community involvement, pupils learn they can make a difference. Using ICT to discuss these themes with other schools, in the UK or overseas, helps pupils understand that their generation can contribute to, and shape, the future.

Achieve economic wellbeing

RE offers young people the skills for living prosperously and ethically in an increasingly complex economic world. Pupils can use their understanding of beliefs and teachings to perceive how economic activity can help or harm humanity, other species and the planet as a whole. Pupils can develop their knowledge and understanding of themes such as equality and justice, personal responsibility, prejudice and discrimination, human rights, fair trade, the environment and climate change, and religious rules on financial matters. By considering and responding to these issues, pupils develop their awareness of how economic wellbeing connects to beliefs, attitudes and lifestyle choices.

Preparation for the world of work includes understanding the differing needs of others in relation to understanding the nature of a contract and the characteristics of trustworthiness, imagination or empathy. RE can develop pupils' awareness of the personal attributes that many employers look for. The workplace can also present pupils with specific religious issues such as diet, clothing, use of money, use of time for prayer, or values and attitudes. RE can provide future employees and employers with crucial information on working with a diverse workforce and public and enrich their understanding of economic and social systems.

Attitudes in religious education

It is vital that religious education encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others. The following four attitudes are essential for good learning in religious education and should be developed at each stage or phase of religious education:

- Self-awareness
- Respect for all
- Open-mindedness
- Appreciation and wonder

Attitudes

Self-Awareness

- feeling confident about personal beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- developing a realistic and positive sense of religious, moral and spiritual ideas
- recognising uniqueness as human beings and affirming self-worth
- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of ideas and behaviour on other people

Respect

- developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when others' views are different
- being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- appreciating that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society
- being prepared to recognise and acknowledge personal bias
- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others

Open-mindedness

- being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions
- being willing to go beyond surface impressions
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith

Appreciation and Wonder

- developing imagination and curiosity
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world
- developing the capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose

Learning across the curriculum:
the contribution of religious education

This section sets out in general terms how religious education can promote learning across the curriculum in a number of areas such as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, key skills and thinking skills.

Promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through religious education

Religious education provides opportunities to promote **spiritual development** through:

- discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, beliefs about God and values such as justice, honesty and truth
- learning about and reflecting on important concepts, experiences and beliefs that are at the heart of religious and other traditions and practices
- considering how beliefs and concepts in religion may be expressed through the creative and expressive art and related to the human and natural sciences, thereby contributing to personal and communal identity
- considering how religions and other world views perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world, and with God
- valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging
- developing their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues.

Religious education provides opportunities to promote moral development through:

- enhancing the values identified within the National Curriculum, particularly valuing diversity and engaging in issues of truth, justice and trust
- exploring the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by

beliefs, teachings, sacred texts and guidance from religious leaders
- considering what is of ultimate value to pupils and believers through studying the key beliefs and teachings from religion and philosophy about ethical codes of practice
- studying a range of ethical issues, including those that focus on justice, to promote racial and religious respect and personal integrity
- considering the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

Religious education provides opportunities to promote social development through:

- considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns
- investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions as well as the common ground between religions
- articulating pupils' own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues.

Religious education provides opportunities to promote cultural development through:

- encountering people, literature, the creative and expressive arts and resources from differing cultures
- considering the relationship between religion and cultures and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices
- promoting racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.

Promoting citizenship through religious education

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting **citizenship** through:

- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
- enabling pupils to think about topical spiritual, moral, social and cultural Issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly
- exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally
- enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events.

Promoting personal, social and health education through religious education

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting personal, social and **health education** through pupils:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by learning about what is fair and unfair, right and wrong and being encouraged to share their opinions
- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle by learning about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality, learning about the purpose and value of religious beliefs and sensitivities in relation to sex education and enabling pupils to consider and express their own views
- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people by learning about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings, considering issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people whose beliefs, views and lifestyles are different from their own.

Promoting key skills through religious education

Religious education provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **communication** through developing a broad and accurate religious vocabulary, reading and responding to a range of written and spoken language (including sacred texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy and worship), communicating ideas using the creative and expressive arts, talking and writing with understanding and insight about religious and other beliefs and values, reflecting critically on ultimate questions of life, using reasoned arguments
- **application of number** through calendrical reckoning, collecting, recording, presenting and interpreting data involving graphs, charts and statistical analysis
- **information technology** through using CD-ROMs and the internet selectively, researching information about religions and beliefs, teaching and practices, using email to communicate and analyse information with people of differing beliefs and cultures, using spreadsheets and databases to handle and present data relevant to the study of religious education
- **working with others** through sharing ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices, collaborating with each other and developing respect and sensitivity
- **improving own learning and performance** through setting targets as part of religious education development, reviewing their achievements and identifying ways to improve their own work
- **problem solving** through recognising key issues to do with religious belief, practice and expression, interpreting and explaining findings and making personal decisions on religious issues (for example, considering their own and religious ideas on good and evil), ethical dilemmas and priorities in life.

Promoting other aspects of the curriculum

Religious education provides opportunities to promote:

- **thinking skills** through helping pupils to research, select, interpret and analyse information from religious traditions, reflect and question their own views and ideas and those of others and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways
- **financial capability** through considering the responsible use of money, the importance of giving and the ethics of wealth, debt, poverty, gambling, business and investment
- **creativity and culture** through considering the scope of human nature, sources of inspiration and discovery, connections between beliefs, values and forms of artistic expression, appreciating the value of cultural distinctiveness and reflecting on beauty, goodness and truth in creative and expressive arts
- **education for racial equality and community cohesion** through studying the damaging effects of xenophobia and racial stereotyping, the impact of conflict in religion and the promotion of respect, understanding and cooperation through dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs
- **effective contributions to scientific, medical and health issues** through exploring philosophical and ethical questions of the origin, purpose and destiny of the cosmos and life within it, exploring the nature of humanity and human interaction with the world, exploring developments in genetics and medicine and their application and use and exploring concepts of health and well-being and their promotion
- **links to employment, vocations and work-related learning** through a focus on individual sense of purpose and aspiration in life, and through considering the appropriateness and relevance of religious education to a wide range of employment opportunities and the development of spiritual and ethical issues linked to the world of work
- **education for sustainable development** through helping pupils consider the origins and value of life, the importance of looking after the environment and studying the ways in which religious beliefs and teachings have influenced attitudes to the environment and other species.

Religious education and the general teaching requirements

This section outlines the particular contribution religious education can make to the general teaching requirements of the National Curriculum.

Religious education and inclusion

Religious education can make a significant contribution to inclusion, particularly in its focus on promoting respect for all. The Agreed Syllabus for religious education contains many references to the role of religious education in challenging stereotypical views and appreciating, positively, differences in others. It enables all pupils to consider the impact of people's beliefs on their own actions and lifestyle. The Agreed Syllabus also highlights the importance of religions and beliefs and how religious education can develop pupils' self-esteem. Effective inclusion involves teaching a lively, stimulating religious education curriculum that:

- builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences pupils bring to religious education
- meets all pupils' learning needs including those with learning difficulties or who are gifted and talented, boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils from all religious communities and pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.

To overcome any potential barriers to learning in religious education, some pupils may require:

- support to access text, such as through prepared tapes, particularly when working with significant quantities of written materials or at speed
- help to communicate their ideas through methods other than extended writing, where this is a requirement. For example, pupils may demonstrate their understanding through speech or the use of ICT
- a non-visual way of accessing sources of information when undertaking research in aspects of religious education, for example using audio materials.

Religious education and the use of language

Religious education can make an important contribution to pupils' use of language by enabling them to:

- acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary
- communicate their ideas with depth and precision
- listen to the views and ideas of others, including people from religious traditions
- be enthused about the power and beauty of language, recognising its limitations
- develop their speaking and listening skills when considering religions, beliefs and ideas and articulating their responses
- read, particularly from sacred texts, write in different styles, such as poetry, diaries, extended writing and the synthesis of differing views, beliefs and ideas
- evaluate clearly and rationally, using a range of reasoned, balanced arguments.

Religious education and the use of information and communication technology

Religious education can make an important contribution to pupils' use of ICT by enabling pupils to:

- make appropriate use of the internet or CD-ROM sources to investigate, analyse and evaluate different aspects of religious beliefs and practices, ultimate questions and ethical issues
- use email or video conferencing to communicate and collaborate with individuals in different locations, enabling associations to be made between religions and individual, national and international life
- use multimedia and presentation software to communicate a personal response, the essence of an argument or a stimulus for discussion
- use writing-support and concept-mapping software to organise thoughts and communicate knowledge and understanding of the diversity of belief and practice within and between religious traditions
- use equipment such as digital cameras and digital video to bring authentic images into the classroom to support discussion and reflection, and to enhance understanding of the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the lives of local individuals and faith communities.

About the attainment targets

The attainment targets for religious education set out the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of key stages 1, 2 and 3. As with the National Curriculum subjects, the attainment targets consist of eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty, plus a description for exceptional performance above level 8. Each level description describes the types and range of performance that pupils working at that level should characteristically demonstrate. Apart from their summative use, these level descriptions can be used in assessment for learning.

The key indicators of attainment in religious education are contained in two attainment targets:
- **Attainment target 1:** Learning about religion
- **Attainment target 2:** Learning from religion.

Learning about religion includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion. It focuses on beliefs, teachings and sources, practices and ways of life and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues.

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on, and response to, their own experiences and learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments, and communicating their responses.

The level descriptions provide the basis to make judgements about pupils' performance at the end of key stages 1, 2 and 3. In the foundation stage, children's attainment is assessed in relation to the early learning goals. At key stage 4, national qualifications are the main means of assessing attainment in religious education.

Assessing attainment at the end of a key stage
The two attainment targets, **Learning about religion** and **Learning from religion** are closely related and neither should be taught in isolation. Therefore, assessment needs to take place in relation to both attainment targets. In deciding on a pupil's level of attainment at the end of a key stage, teachers should judge which description best fits the pupil's performance. When doing so, each description should be considered alongside descriptions for adjacent levels. There are no national statutory assessment requirements in religious education, but schools must report to parents on pupils' progress in religious education.

It is important to note that not all aspects of religious education can be assessed. For example, pupils may express personal views and ideas that, although integral to teaching and learning, would not be appropriate for formal assessment.

Attainment targets for religious education

Level 1
Attainment target 1
Pupils use some religious words and phrases to recognise and name features of religious life and practice. They can recall religious stories and recognise symbols, and other verbal and visual forms of religious expression.

Attainment target 2
Pupils talk about their own experiences and feelings, what they find interesting or puzzling and what is of value and concern to themselves and others.

Level 2
Attainment target 1
Pupils use religious words and phrases to identify some features on religion and its importance for some people. They begin to show awareness of similarities in religions. Pupils retell religious stories and suggest meanings for religious actions and symbols. They identify how religion is expressed in different ways.

Attainment target 2
Pupils ask, and respond sensitively to, questions about their own and others' experiences and feelings. They recognise that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer. In relation to matters of right and wrong, they recognise their own values and those of others.

Level 3
Attainment target 1
Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe some key features of religions, recognising similarities and differences. They make links between beliefs and sources, including religious stories and sacred texts. They begin to identify the impact religion has on believers' lives. They describe some forms of religious expression.

Attainment target 2
Pupils identify what influences them, making links between aspects of their own and others' experiences. They ask important questions about religion and beliefs, making links between their own and others' responses. They make links between values and commitments, and their own attitudes and behaviour.

Level 4
Attainment target 1
Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, practices, beliefs, ideas, feelings and experiences. They make links between them, and describe some similarities and differences both within and between religions. They describe the impact of religion on people's lives. They suggest meanings for a range of forms of religious expression.

Attainment target 2
Pupils raise, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth and commitments. They apply their ideas to their own and other people's lives. They describe what inspires and influences themselves and others.

Level 5
Attainment target 1
Pupils use an increasingly wide religious vocabulary to explain the impact of beliefs on individuals and communities. They describe why people belong to religions. They understand that similarities and differences illustrate distinctive beliefs within and between religions and suggest possible reasons for this. They explain how religious sources are used to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues, recognising diversity in forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression, within and between religions.

Attainment target 2
Pupils ask, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments, relating them to their own and others' lives. They explain what inspires and influences them, expressing their own and others' views on the challenges of belonging to a religion.

Level 6
Attainment target 1
Pupils use religious and philosophical vocabulary to give informed accounts of religions and beliefs, explaining the reasons for diversity within and between them. They explain why the impact of religions and beliefs on individuals, communities and societies varies. They interpret sources and arguments, explaining the reasons that are used in different ways by different traditions to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues. They interpret the significance of different forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

Attainment target 2
Pupils use reasoning and examples to express insights into the relationship between beliefs, teachings and world issues. They express insights into their own and others' views on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth. They consider the challenges of belonging to a religion in the contemporary world, focusing on values and commitments.

Level 7
Attainment target 1
Pupils use a wide religious and philosophical vocabulary to show a coherent understanding of a range of religions and beliefs. They analyse issues, values and questions of meaning and truth. They account for the influence of history and culture on aspects of religious life and practice. They explain why the consequences of belonging to a faith are not the same for all people within the same religion or tradition. They use some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied, including the use of a variety of sources, evidence and forms of expression.

Attainment target 2
Pupils articulate personal and critical responses to questions of meaning, purpose and truth and ethical issues. They evaluate the significance of religious and other views for understanding questions of human relationships, belonging, identity, society, values and commitments, using appropriate evidence and examples.

Level 8
Attainment target 1
Pupils use a comprehensive religious and philosophical vocabulary to analyse a range of religions and beliefs. The contextualize interpretations of religions with reference to historical, cultural, social and philosophical ideas. They critically evaluate the impact of religions and beliefs on differing communities and societies. They analyse differing interpretations of religious, spiritual and moral sources, using some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied. They interpret and evaluate varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

Attainment target 2
Pupils coherently analyse a wide range of viewpoints on questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. They synthesise a range of evidence, arguments, reflections and examples, fully justifying their own views and ideas and providing a detailed evaluation of the perspectives of others.

Exceptional performance
Attainment target 1
Pupils use a complex religious, moral and philosophical vocabulary to provide a consistent and detailed analysis of religions and beliefs. They evaluate in depth the importance of religious diversity in a pluralistic society. They clearly recognise the extent to which the impact of religion and beliefs on different communities and societies has changed over time. They provide a detailed analysis of how religious, spiritual and moral sources are interpreted in different ways, evaluating the principal methods by which religion and spirituality are studied. They synthesise effectively their accounts of the varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

Attainment target 2
Pupils analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments. They give independent, well-informed and highly reasoned insights into their own and others' perspectives on religious and spiritual issues, providing well-substantiated and balanced conclusions.

Performance descriptions across subjects

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that some pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts.

P1

(i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, for example, startling at sudden noises and movements. Any participation is fully prompted.

(ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, for example, becoming still in response to silence. They may give intermittent reactions, for example, vocalising occasionally during group celebrations and acts of worship.

P2

(i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, for example, briefly looking around in unfamiliar natural and man-made environments. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, for example leaning towards the source of light, sound or scent. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, for example, touching a range of religious artefacts and found objects in partnership with a member of staff.

(ii) Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, for example, showing that they have enjoyed an experience or interaction. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, for example, becoming quiet and attentive during a certain piece of music. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, for example, repeating a simple action with an artefact. They co-operate with shared exploration and supported participation, for example, performing gestures during ritual exchanges with another person performing gestures.

P3

(i) Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, for example, prompting a visitor to prolong an interaction. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, for example, stroking or shaking artefacts or found objects. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, for example, when vocalising in a quiet place. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, for example, following a familiar ritual and responding appropriately.

(ii) Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, for example, prompting an adult to sing or play a favourite song. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, for example, celebrating the achievements of their peers in assembly. They may respond to options and choices with actions and gestures, for example, choosing to participate in activities. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, for example, contemplating the flickering of a candle flame. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example passing an artefact to a peer in order to prompt participation in a group activity.

Performance descriptions in religious education

From Level P4 to P8, it is possible to describe pupil's performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, understanding and knowledge in RE. The descriptions provide an example of how this can be done.

P4
Pupils experience a variety of stories, celebrations and events from Christianity and other religions. They respond using single elements of communication, for example, word, gesture, sign or symbols. They begin to respond to the feelings of others by appropriate responses. They demonstrate an appreciation of stillness and quietness.

P5
Pupils respond appropriately to simple questions about familiar religious events or experiences and communicate simple meaning. They respond to a variety of new religious experiences, for example, involving music, drama, colour, light, food or tactile objects.

P6
Learning about
Pupils express and communicate feelings in different ways. They respond to others in group situations and co-operate when working in small groups. Pupils listen to and begin to respond to familiar religious studies and music. They make their own contributions to celebrations and festivals. They carry out ritualised actions in familiar circumstances.

Learning from
They show concern or sympathy for the feelings of others through gestures, facial expressions etc or by offering comfort. They start to become aware of their own influences on events and other people.

P7
Learning about
Pupils listen to and follow religious stories. They communicate their ideas about religion, life events and experiences in simple phrases. They comment on their own work and behaviour in simple ways. They begin to identify actions as right or wrong.

Learning from
They learn from experiencing aspects of religion through stories, music, and drama etc. They answer questions and communicate responses that indicate an understanding of religious experiences. They begin to understand that other people have needs and to respect them.

P8
Learning about
Pupils listen attentively to religious stories or to people talking about religion. They are increasingly able to communicate ideas, feelings and responses to experiences, or the re-telling of religious stories. They communicate simple facts about religion and important people in religions. They begin to realise the significance of religious artefacts, symbols and places.

Learning from
Pupils begin to understand that religious stories and other stories carry moral and religious meanings. They reflect on what makes them happy, sad, excited, or lonely etc. They demonstrate a basic understanding of right and wrong in familiar situations. They are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, and show respect for themselves and other people. They treat living things and the environment with respect.

The enclosed CD-ROM contains support material to be used alongside
Liverpool's Revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education:
• Exemplar schemes of work (Foundation, KS1, 2 and 3)
• 'I CAN' statements linked to the attainment targets
• Glossary
• PDF of the Agreed Syllabus

The City of Liverpool