

## The Role of the Religious Education Teacher

Most teachers are concerned about all aspects education of the personal development of the pupils in their care. This includes their spiritual and moral development, which is at the heart of good Religious Education. **Religious Education is not concerned with the nurture of a particular faith or acceptance of a religious way of life.** Nurture in faith is the responsibility of the home and faith community. However, Religious Education is about enabling pupils to explore the meaning of life, the nature of faith and what it means to live life as a believer.

Teaching Religious Education therefore does not require the teacher to have a personal faith or commitment to a religious perspective on and understanding of life. It does, however, require the acceptance that such a view is an entirely valid one, that religion is of considerable importance to the vast majority of people in our world and that its study is, therefore, an important part of the curriculum.

The Kent Agreed Syllabus is designed to support the specialist and non-specialist, the committed and uncommitted through the provision of a coherent framework of appropriate content and pedagogy. If the aim of achieving high standards of teaching and learning in RE are to be achieved, then it is of course to teachers that the task of translating the Programmes of Study into classroom reality ultimately falls.

It is the responsibility of each teacher involved in the subject to ensure that :

- the Religious Education provided is planned and matched to pupils' abilities so that an understanding of what it means to be 'religious' and how people of faith express their experience through their religion can be meaningfully explored
- pupils are encouraged to think about religion and faith, explore the nature of belief and its impact on the morals, attitudes, values and behaviour of believers
- pupils explore the affective / spiritual dimension of Religious Education (AT2) and relate understandings gained to their own life experiences

The nature of RE, particularly the second aim of this syllabus which is concerned with 'learning from' religion and relating it to human and personal life experience may lead to pupils asking difficult questions or making personal disclosures. Such situations can be difficult to manage but should not be avoided, for they are at the heart of good and effective RE. The following guidance is offered with a view to helping and supporting teachers in dealing with potentially difficult situations positively and with a view to contributing to the personal and spiritual development of pupils effectively

Examples of difficult situations might include pupils:

- asking questions to which the religions have no agreed answer eg. 'Is Jesus the Son of God?'
- asking questions which raise theological and philosophical issues eg. 'If God is a good God why does he / she allow evil and suffering?' or more personal versions of this question eg. 'Why did God let this happen to me / my relative / friend?' etc

- asking about the teacher's beliefs eg. 'Do you believe in God?'
- making comments or asking questions that suggest a hostile, negative or unreflective approach to religion eg. 'Why are you peddling this God stuff?'; 'Are you one of the God squad?'
- making disclosures that reveal personal faith commitment eg. 'I believe that the Qur'an is the absolute word of Allah'
- making personal disclosures eg. 'My mum/dad left us last week'; 'My granddad died yesterday'
- making inappropriate comments on the faith of other people, eg. 'The Bible is a load of rubbish'; 'People who believe in God are stupid'

Such situations may be difficult for one or more reasons:

- they may cause upset or offence to other pupils
- they may expose the pupil to upsetting comments
- they may reveal misunderstandings that seem in need of correction
- there may be no straightforward answer to the question
- they may reveal an inability to cope with differences of opinion
- they may be embarrassing
- there may not be time to deal with them
- the teacher may not have the training or knowledge needed to deal with them

There are no meaningful 'stock answer' responses nor 'off the shelf' ways of dealing with such classroom incidents. Teachers will need to use their professional judgement and sensitivity and work within the good relationships they have built with pupils.

The ethos of the school and RE's contribution to it are important in establishing the right climate for dealing with such questions and incidents. The following practical guidance may be helpful.

### **Practical Guidelines**

- establish clear ground rules with the class for discussing controversial issues
- encourage the use of 'owning and grounding' language such as 'in my opinion' or 'some Hindus would say'
- treat a question or incident as a positive rather than negative event wherever possible but if a difficult issue which is impossible to handle properly at the time arises, arrange to return to it later when it can be dealt with in a more considered way
- affirm the importance of the pupils' contributions, even if you do not agree with them
- help pupils to understand that diversity of opinion and the existence of unanswerable questions are fundamental to human existence and experience and are aspects of life that we all have to learn to live with
- allow for the possibility of a range of answers or opinions and encourage an awareness of diversity without undermining pupils' own beliefs
- use the situation to open up rather than close down conversation or thinking. Encourage a 'let's explore this together' approach

- encourage further exploration by suggesting other people that pupils could ask and places they might look for more information. Affirm the importance of people close to the pupil, such as their family, their faith community, their friends
- correct factual misinformation, wherever possible, without confrontation whilst always respecting the right of the pupils, their families and the members of the communities to which they belong to hold their own beliefs
- in the case of personal disclosure, the prime need may be for comfort, affirmation or support rather than abstract discussion. It may be possible to suggest a follow-up to the pupil's disclosure eg. with a personal tutor but if this is inappropriate or not possible then set the class an activity that provides time to attend to the pupil or allows some personal space
- throw questions back for further clarification with the aim of keeping the pupil pondering, rather than giving closed answers when there is clearly no one answer
- be as honest as possible without being ruthless eg. re what may have happened to a dead relative. In these circumstances a teacher should not normally challenge a pupil's belief
- let a discussion develop if it is being considered seriously by the class and try to end with a period of reflection to provide a suitable close to the discussion and lesson
- never intrude into a pupil's personal life and ensure that pupils know they always have the freedom to remain silent should they so wish

## Leadership and Management of Religious Education: The Role of the Subject Leader

The quality of subject leadership is critical to the quality of teaching, learning and therefore of standards achieved in religious education (RE), as in all subjects. The Agreed Syllabus Conference recommends that schools appoint a subject leader in RE who is a subject specialist. If that is not possible, for example in some primary schools, then someone with knowledge of and an interest in the subject should be encouraged to lead.

It is good practice for schools to appoint a link governor for RE. The publication and implementation of this agreed syllabus provides a good opportunity for the subject leader and link governor to lead a subject policy review. An exemplar policy is included with this guidance, which gives schools the opportunity and flexibility to articulate clearly how they intend to interpret and implement the RE curriculum in their own particular context.

Subject leaders should be aware of two important documents on this issue:

- **'National Standards for Subject Leaders'** (TTA - 1998) which sets out generic standards for subject leaders under key headings based on how experienced co-ordinators/heads of departments provide effective leadership in their subject(s)
- **'Standards for Subject Leaders in Religious Education'** (TTA/AREIAC 1998) which customises the TTA generic standards and requirements to aspects which are specific to subject leaders in RE. (Note - this document is available from AREIAC Publications, Resource House, Kay Street, Bury BL9 6BU - Price £10 including p&p)

The rise in the importance and acknowledgement of school and thus departmental self-evaluation has led to a commensurate rise in expectations of those with subjects leadership and management responsibility. There is an expectation that subject leaders will have an informed overview of their subject(s) founded on a sound evidence base, eg. examination/assessment data, monitoring of teachers' planning, analysis/scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observation, discussions with pupils and colleagues and so on.

The monitoring role within the overall subject leadership one is critical and there are tools to support subject leaders in fulfilling this responsibility effectively. Use of the Ofsted S4 form, for example, related to a subject or department provides a good guide to the areas about which subject leaders should know and be able to discuss or write. Rigorous use of such a self-evaluative tool, for example annually, should result in a clear overview of the current situation in the subject and the production of an action plan for progress and improvement.

The monitoring role of the subject leader includes:

- monitoring subject planning
- monitoring subject delivery
- monitoring assessment of the subject
- monitoring record keeping and reporting of the subject

The purposes of monitoring include:

- providing information about, and raising, standards of achievement
- improving the quality of teaching and learning
- supporting teachers in becoming more effective
- ensuring that teacher expectations are sufficiently high
- providing information about gaps in subject coverage
- ensuring that each child receives their full entitlement
- identifying and sharing good practice
- identifying professional development needs
- identifying future development needs
- generating an evaluative report which can be shared with all staff

Below are some **key questions** which might be asked, some particularly in primary schools to give an overview, followed by some specific guidance on particular aspects of monitoring such as analysis of pupils work and lesson observation.

In terms of general/overview monitoring, it is appropriate for subject leaders to ask:

- is there a planned programme of RE across the school in accordance with the syllabus?
- is the curriculum time for RE at or above the minimum time required by the syllabus eg. over a term, year and key stage?
- are resources for RE adequate and used appropriately? Are resources varied, accurate and authentic?
- does the taught programme of RE address the key questions from the syllabus appropriately?
- is there a suitable balance between the twin aims of the syllabus? (Aim 1: learning about religion and religions; Aim 2: learning from religion and religions)
- do teachers have clear objectives and set high expectations in RE? (These will be informed by the eight level scale of attainment in the agreed syllabus)
- are achievement and standards of attainment in RE promoted through high expectations of pupil progress and a challenging RE curriculum for all pupils?
- are RE lessons well structured, organised and managed?
- are teaching and learning focused on appropriate objectives and suitably paced?
- is there a suitable proportion of direct teaching in RE and is there a balanced variety of opportunities for pupils to respond eg. through paired, group and individual work
- does whole class work, discussion and questioning enable all pupils to participate and make progress?

- in what ways does the teaching provide opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and are these identified eg. in planning?
- is RE teaching providing varied opportunities for pupils to develop ideas, arguments, thoughtful reflections and questions of their own?
- are support staff deployed effectively to support learning in RE?
- do pupils with a variety of special needs, including the more able pupils, make appropriate progress in RE?

**To support subject leaders in fulfilling their monitoring role effectively, checklists for each of the areas identified below are included with this guidance.**

### **Lesson observation**

Teachers find lesson observation both challenging and reassuring. RE subject leaders may wish to take a lead in being observed: this is good practice and sets an appropriate example and tone within which the exercise can be consulted. A programme of observation is often most effective if it runs alongside opportunities for continuing professional development, and if the focus is clear, for example on a particular religion, or 'learning from religion' through developing skills of reflection.

### **Analysis / scrutiny of pupils' work**

- judgements about pupils' attainment and achievements are crucial to self-evaluation and therefore must be as accurate as possible
- measuring achievement ie. progress made against prior attainment involves evaluating the changes in pupils' levels of attainment over time
- work scrutiny should evaluate both provision and outcomes and can occur in a number of contexts, eg. sitting alongside pupils as they work; looking at the books of a whole set or class; observation of displays; systematically sampling work eg. groups of books or examples of above below and average pupils' work on a regular basis should evaluate provision and outcomes

#### *Provision includes:*

- the quality of marking
- the range of opportunities provided for pupils to develop skills and competencies across a broad curriculum
- whether the work is matched to the pupils' levels of attainment
- the effective use of assessment to inform teaching
- the relative demands made of pupils by different subjects

#### *Outcomes include:*

- pupils' attainment by attainment target
- the progress made by individual pupils and by different groups of pupils (higher attainers, ethnic minorities)

- the progress made by different year groups and by sets or parallel groups where relevant

### **Monitoring short-term planning**

Monitoring planning secures subject coverage and provision by checking that programmes of study are translating accurately and appropriately into schemes of work and thus to classroom practice through individual lesson plans.

The criteria on which to base judgements when evaluating planning and/or assessment, recording and reporting set out below can be easily turned into questions.

These questions should be asked of any planning scrutinised and answers will determine the judgement of the quality of lesson planning seen.

### **Talking with pupils or students**

Pupils themselves are a vital source of information about their work, learning, standards and attitudes and behaviour. Some questions you might ask pupils when talking about their work with them are included below.

### **Giving accurate feedback effectively**

Communicating feedback effectively is imperative for ongoing improvement and progress. Creating a positive, non-threatening climate is essential; guidance is set out below.

Finally, also included is a checklist of some 'Possible areas for discussion with curriculum co-ordinators', which subject leaders may find useful as they cover, for example, the areas about which Ofsted inspectors expect subject leaders to have knowledge.

Keeping a subject / departmental file is good practice and suggestions for content and format are also included at the end of this article of guidance.

## Monitoring short term planning

Effective lesson plans include:

- clear learning objectives
- approximate timings for each part of the lesson
- activities which relate to the learning objective
- variety of teaching strategies and learning experiences
- the subject-specific language to be used
- the deployment of, and tasks for, additional adults
- briefing notes for support staff and others
- special resources that are needed for the lesson
- indication of where work is differentiated
- assessment details for individuals, groups or the whole class
- evaluation notes
- assessments and evaluations inform to future planning
- information for use in the next lesson

## **Questions/criteria on which to base judgements from scrutiny and evaluation of pupils' work**

### **Teaching**

- does the work provide evidence of a broad and balanced curriculum?
- does the work match national curriculum requirements?

### ***Range of tasks***

- do you see evidence of pupils using higher order thinking skills eg. did you see any examples of reporting, describing, instructing, explaining, narrating, persuading, arguing?
- is there too great a reliance on worksheets which do little to extend pupils' development?
- do tasks value process as well as product?
- is there a variety of tasks?
- are tasks motivating, challenging and matched to pupils' needs and abilities?
- are pupils ever asked to write for an audience other than themselves or the teacher?
- are research skills and note taking taught?

### ***Assessment***

- is marking helpful? Is it about content / organisation or spelling / punctuation? Is it sparse and fragmentary; uneven but good in some classes or regular and helpful? Is it evaluative or diagnostic? Is it regular, systematic and consistent?
- how detailed is the marking eg. ticks only, a mark or grade, comments or correction in the margin, a summative comment which is personal to the pupil?
- is there any evidence that targets are set or action taken as a result of the assessment?
- is unfinished work monitored?

### ***Planning***

- is there some consistency and continuity from one teacher to another?

### **Learning**

- are pupils evidently achieving more from one year to the next, eg. gains in knowledge/understanding/skills?
- what competencies as learners does the evidence show eg. research, problem solving?
- looking back through the current book is there clear evidence that progress is being made?
- is there any significant variation in the quality and quantity of work produced during the year?

**Attainment and Achievement (these are not the same thing)**

- how do standards achieved compare to national norms and pupils in similar schools?
- is the standard of work produced appropriate for the year group? Is work worse than is usually seen? Average? Better than average?
- is there evidence of progress over time and is this in line with, below or above expected rates or progress?
- are pupils becoming increasingly aware of how written communications can serve a variety of purposes?
- does pupils' work increase in subtlety and discrimination?
- are pupils learning to organise work. Did you see any examples of drafting, economical note-taking, collaborative writing?
- do pupils persevere with tasks?
- do pupils ever use writing to sort out their ideas as well as communicate them? Is work ever experimental or imaginative?
- is there evidence of under-achievement?
- is the content appropriate? Is there evidence of differentiation?
- is the work correct? To what extent does the pupil use standard English, conventional syntax, accurate spelling and consistent punctuation?
- is the work well presented, neat and tidy? Are books looked after carefully? Are there any differences for age groups or between boys and girls? Is work carefully laid out? Is handwriting legible? Is the work well organised? Are diagrams and sketches completed neatly and clearly?
- do pupils take a pride in their work? Are there signs that they are trying to do it to the best of their ability? Can they write at appropriate length, linking ideas together? Do they respond to comments by the teacher?
- is work tackled with enjoyment or do pupils demonstrate little interest? Are pupils confident about using the written word?
- is ICT being used appropriately?

## Discussions with pupils and students

Some areas you might explore with pupils/students when talking about their work in Religious Education with them include:

- standards - how well they know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve
- which parts of the subject they are particularly good/weak at and why
- any parts of the subject about which they are not very certain
- what they have learned in the subject today/this week/recently
- the range of approaches to learning they experience (including ICT); which approaches they prefer and why eg. reading, writing, speaking, listening, experiential, audio-visual etc
- a piece of work they are particularly proud of and/or a module/topic which they enjoyed learning about and remember well
- how regularly their work is marked; whether they understand the marking system and find it helpful or not; whether the marking identifies clearly areas for improvement
- how often homework is given and the variety of tasks set; the usefulness/effectiveness of homework; how homework is received and responded to by the teacher
- their suggestions about how teaching and their learning in the subject might be improved and made more enjoyable/effective/useful

## Lesson observation

At the end of a lesson observation the observer should be able to evaluate and make a judgement on:

- the quality of teaching and learning
- standards attained by pupils
- pupils' achievement
- pupils' behaviour, attitudes, relationships and personal development

**Evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching is based upon its impact on pupils' learning ie. the pupils and their learning are the focus of observations.**

Evaluation and judgements in each of these areas are based upon commonly agreed criteria:

### *Teaching and learning*

- the teacher has secure knowledge and understanding of the subject
- planning is effective with clear objectives which are communicated to pupils
- the teacher shows an ability to challenge and inspire pupils
- the teacher uses methods which enable all pupils to learn effectively eg. boys and girls, minority ethnic pupils, pupils with different learning styles (VAK learners)
- pupils are managed well, the teacher insists on high standards of behaviour
- time, support staff and ICT are used effectively
- pupils' work is assessed thoroughly and used to encourage pupils to overcome difficulties and improve
- homework is used to reinforce and/or extend what is learned in the lesson
- teaching meets the needs of all pupils eg. SEN, gifted and talented pupils, and pupils having English as an additional language
- pupils acquire new knowledge or skills, they develop ideas and increase their understanding
- pupils apply intellectual, physical or creative effort. They work productively and at a good pace
- pupils show interest in their work, sustain concentration; they think and learn for themselves
- pupils understand what they are doing and what they must do to improve

### *Attitudes*

- pupils are positive, keen and eager; they show an interest in their work

***Behaviour***

- pupils behave well, they are courteous, trustworthy and show respect for other people and property

***Relationships***

- pupils form constructive relationships and work in a positive atmosphere. They reflect on what they do and understand how it impacts on others

***Personal development***

- pupils' show respect for other people's feelings, views, beliefs and values; they show initiative and are willing to take responsibility

***Teaching cannot be satisfactory if any of the following is present:***

- teachers' knowledge of the subject is not good enough to promote demanding work
- basic skills are not taught effectively
- a significant minority of pupils is not engaged with the lesson
- lessons are poorly planned, organised and time is therefore wasted
- there are weaknesses in controlling and managing pupils and their behaviour
- pupils do not know or are not sure what they are or should be doing
- pupils are not making expected progress

***Standards***

- what pupils know, understand and can do in relation to different aspects of appropriate attainment targets. A level should be assigned to the standard of pupils' attainment and strengths and weaknesses across different aspects of ATs highlighted
- check for significant variation in the attainment and progress of pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background, and feedback appropriately
- check for significant variation in the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs, those who have English as an additional language and gifted and talented pupils

***Achievement***

- how pupils achieve in relation to their capability and prior level of attainment
- value-added measures should be used to indicate rates of progress
- work should be demanding enough to enable all individuals and groups to achieve

***Achievement is unsatisfactory when:***

- progress is patchy and pupils are not challenged
- there are signs of underachievement among groups of pupils
- value-added indicators are negative
- achievement is below expectations for pupils of their age and ability

A new framework for **Ofsted inspection** has been in use since September 2005. When making judgements about any element of what is inspected only four categories will be used:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>inadequate</b>

**It is important to bear these in mind when coming to judgements within your own self-evaluation framework.**

## Feedback to teachers

**To be effective, feedback to individual teachers should:**

- be on-going
- be given by the observer involved
- be well informed
- be sensitive about the messages being delivered, particularly where these are difficult, eg. through tone of voice, body language, good eye contact etc
- clearly identify strengths and areas for development in a helpful, supportive way
- provide clear reasons for judgements
- ensure that the teacher is aware of how to improve
- allow time for a professional discussion with the teacher through encouraging responses, questions and comments
- use the grading method agreed with the school, for example use of numbers or descriptions, eg. good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory etc

**Overall:** effective feedback delivers messages sensitively but confidently and gives the teacher a clear indication of his or her strengths and how to improve

## Subject Self- Evaluation

See Appendix i for full details of using the 'Self evaluation toolkit'

Using the Self Evaluation toolkit would be useful preparation before Inspection

### Inspection: areas of discussion with subject leaders

Below are key areas and types of questions inspectors will expect to cover in a discussion with subject leaders. Subject leaders could use these, for example as part of an annual self-evaluation exercise, to ensure that they have a clear view of the current state of the subject and in secondary phase schools, the department.

**Note:** Standards are the levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils reach compared with pupils of the same age nationally

**Achievement** is an assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to their capability. It is a judgement about whether pupils are doing as well as they can

#### Standards and Achievement

- standards v national/local expectations at the end of each key stage
- standards v similar schools, statistical neighbours etc
- standards v pupils' prior attainment and capabilities
- standards v pupils' performance in other subjects - do they do as well in RE?
- variations in attainment/achievement by different groups of pupils eg. boys and girls, SEN pupils, gifted and talented pupils, EAL pupils, minority ethnic pupils, travellers, refugees
- whether pupils know how they are doing and progressing and how accurately and effectively this is communicated to them
- trends over time
- progress being made towards any targets that have been set to improve standards

An **evidence base** to support statements about the above would include eg:

- performance data from end of key stages
- trends in results over time against the average for all schools/similar schools

- examples of work (levelled) from pupils of average, above average and below average ability, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in what pupils know, understand and can do
- examples of work (levelled) showing any variations in attainment by different groups of pupils and their progress over time (portfolio)

### **Teaching and its effectiveness ie. impact on learning**

- does teaching meet the learning needs of all pupils eg. teaching of literacy and numeracy to those with poor basic skills?
- do teachers use a variety of approaches so that all pupils learn effectively, for example taking account of different learning styles eg. visual auditory and kinaesthetic learners?
- is teachers' subject knowledge adequate and up-to-date, such that new approaches which challenge and inspire pupils are constantly being introduced eg ICT?
- do teachers plan effectively, set clear objectives, share these with pupils and check pupils understanding and progress during and at the end of lessons?
- is pupils' work assessed thoroughly and accurately and are assessments used effectively to promote future learning?
- are pupils managed well with an insistence on high standards of work and behaviour?
- are time, homework, resources and ICT used effectively?

### **Learning**

- do pupils acquire new knowledge or skills, develop ideas and increase understanding at an appropriate rate for their age and ability?
- do pupils put intellectual, physical and creative effort into their work?
- are pupils productive and do they work at a good pace?
- do pupils show interest in their work and sustain concentration?
- do pupils think and learn for themselves; are they encouraged and given opportunities to become independent learners?
- do pupils make appropriate progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?
- do pupils clearly understand what they are doing, how well they have done and what they need to do to improve?

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- do pupils display positive attitudes to the subject in terms of their behaviour, relationships, personal development and attendance eg. are they enthusiastic about the subject; involved in a range of activities including extra-curricular; do they attend and behave well; show courtesy and respect for the

differences, feelings, values and beliefs of other people; form constructive relationships with one another, teachers and other adults; check bullying, sexism, and racism; reflect on the key issues and questions of the subject?

An **evidence base** to support statements about the above would include eg:

- a programme of lesson observations and feedback to teachers
- scrutiny and analysis of pupils' work and feedback to them re improvement
- monitoring of teachers' planning with feedback
- discussion with pupils re their learning, progress, attitudes etc.

### **Leadership and management**

- how effectively the subject leader fulfils the leadership and management role ie. rigorously monitors and evaluates subject/departmental performance to promote high standards, diagnoses strengths and weaknesses; takes effective action to secure improvements; promotes among colleagues a shared commitment to improvement and belief in their capacity to succeed in raising standards
- that the subject/dept. demonstrates its concern for pupils through both promoting their personal development and also through monitoring their academic and personal development eg. that:
  - effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are in place
  - all available data is used effectively
  - marking of all types of work is conscientious and rigorous
  - assessment information is used to set targets and guide future learning
  - reports / feedback to pupils indicates what they need to do to improve
  - effective support and advice is provided eg. attention to IEPs for SEN pupils
- that the subject leader has a clear and accurate view of the present state and future direction and development of the subject/dept. eg. progress since the last inspection or self-evaluation and that this is founded on a sound evidence base
- that the subject/dept. has a policy and an action plan with appropriate priorities and targets and regularly reviews progress towards targets
- that resources and funding are linked to the priorities identified in the action plan
- that the subject leader is aware of changes in the subject, effective systems to implement necessary changes are in place and that key people in the school are kept informed about the subject eg. headteacher, parents, governing body
- that systems are in place to keep teachers up-to-date re developments, give access to In-service training and ensure that any new initiatives and developments have an impact and are evaluated

- that staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate and that strengths and weaknesses in the subject are highlighted where they affect the quality of education provided and the educational standards achieved
- that best value principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition are applied in the subject's management and use of resources as appropriate

## Assessment, recording and reporting

Some questions that external inspectors might ask and which can be adapted for internal evaluation at subject/departmental level include:

- what is the school policy on ARR and does it meet statutory requirements?
- is it understood and consistently applied by all staff?
- is assessment accurate?
- do pupils receive useful information about their performance through assessment?
- is pupils' work standardised?
- is recording used to inform planning? (for whole class or individual needs)
- how do reports draw on records of assessment and provide parents with useful and clear information?
- do assessment and records cover adequately the full range of attainment targets?
- are criteria for assessment and merit awards clear to staff and pupils and consistently applied?
- does pupil self-assessment play a part and if so how effective is it?
- how effectively does the school use baseline assessment to plan pupils' learning, set appropriate targets and chart pupils' progress?
- how effectively does the school use available data to plan teaching and learning, set targets and monitor progress?
- how effectively does the school use value-added measures?

## A Model Policy for Religious Education

This policy has been adopted by the governors in consultation with the headteacher, subject leader and teaching staff. The policy was approved by the governing body on ....(date) and will be reviewed on ....(date).

### *Legal Requirements*

Curriculum 2000 recognises Religious Education (RE) as a 'core' subject required for all pupils.

Religious Education at (AnyTown School) is provided in line with and meets statutory requirements, which are that:

- the curriculum for every maintained school shall comprise a basic curriculum which includes provision for religious education for all pupils registered at the school
- the religious education programme must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain
- the religious education provided shall be in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus for Kent.

### *Aims of Religious Education*

Within the framework of statutory requirements and those of the locally agreed syllabus, our aims in RE are:

(identify some aims specific to the school which reflect your particular context and current thinking/situation) - the aims of the agreed syllabus will help you and some examples based on these are given below:

- to enable each pupil to explore our shared human experience and the questions of meaning and purpose which arise from our experiences
- to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion through exploration of the beliefs and practices of the principal world faiths represented in Kent and Great Britain
- to affirm each pupil in her/his own family tradition, religious or non-faith, and through that to promote awareness, respect and sensitivity for the traditions of other people
- to provide opportunities for the cultivation of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- to support pupils in reflecting and thinking about fundamental human beliefs and values so that they develop a personal framework by which they can live

### *School Context*

(AnyTown First / Primary / Middle / Secondary / High/ Special) school serves children between the ages of ..... within the (name of area) of Kent.

We work to the Kent Agreed Syllabus for RE and recognise the variety of religious and non-religious families from which our pupils come. We welcome and celebrate this diversity, are sensitive to the home background of each child and work to ensure that all pupils feel and are included in our RE programme. We are pleased to have the support of members of all local faith communities, we enjoy good relationships with them and encourage them to make positive contributions to the school and RE when appropriate. We recognise the importance of pupils' all-round personal development and the leading role that RE plays in contributing to the spiritual, moral social and cultural elements in particular. We affirm the equality of importance of the twin aims of RE as expressed in the agreed syllabus and teach to these in a balanced way, ensuring that the 'affective' dimension of RE is addressed.

### ***School specific information***

- At AnyTown the subject leader for RE is ..... and s/he is responsible for leading, managing and monitoring all aspects of the subject to secure high standards of attainment and achievement in RE.
- The subject leader is also responsible for supporting all colleagues who teach RE, for example, through provision of advice and guidance on teaching and learning strategies. S/he also has oversight of their continuing professional development, particularly with regard to the acquisition of the necessary subject knowledge and understanding to teach the subject effectively.
- A detailed scheme of work, based on the agreed syllabus and supplemented by the QCA National Framework and guidance for RE (2004), is available for teachers and for scrutiny by interested parties.
- Provision in RE is through (eg. termly themes) in Reception and Key Stage 1 where Christianity and Hinduism are the major religions studied. At Key Stage 2 pupils learn about Christianity throughout the key stage and also have the opportunity to study two other world faiths in depth; Islam in years 3 and 4 and Judaism in years 5 and 6.
- Time allocation follows the recommendations of the Agreed Syllabus and the QCA National Framework guidance, both of which recommend a minimum of 36 hours for RE at Key Stage 1 and a minimum of 45 hours at Key Stage 2.
- Our policy and practice is to use a breadth and variety of teaching and learning styles in RE to engage pupils positively and actively with the subject content. Thus we aim to increase the use of, for example, art, drama, ICT, speaking and listening activities, audio-visual materials, posters, photographs, display work and visitors/visits to/from faith communities. RE is expected to comply with the whole school policy on teaching and learning and to contribute to cross-curricular work in an appropriate way.
- The agreed syllabus provides descriptions of levels of attainment which are used to assess pupils' standards and monitor their progress. We report on pupils' progress and attainment in RE to parents at the end of each key stage as required by law and reporting is based on these level descriptors. We undertake to make individual and accurate comments on each pupil's progress in RE to parents, based on regular monitoring of work using the level descriptors within the Agreed Syllabus.

Information of this nature will transfer with pupils to their new school(s) when they leave.

- Portfolios of pupils' work designed to help teachers make judgements about achievement, attainment and progress over time are kept and are available for interested parties. Teachers add to the portfolio examples of assessments and pupils' work which show clear evidence of progress and achievement. This approach supports exemplification of standards in RE and clarifies our understanding of what makes for quality learning in the subject.
- Resources - examples of some of the variety of resources at the subject's disposal; any new resources; library provision; specific types of resource such as 'big books'; storage arrangements; borrowing procedures.
- Visits to local faith communities - a statement highlighting any particularly close relationships or ties eg. with local church / vicar for festival services etc; educational visits which are part of the RE programme eg. to places of worship, major religious traditions other than Christian, use of any visitors from faith communities to the school to support the RE programme Which communities? Who makes the arrangements?

We intend that this policy will operate for the next three years when it will be subject to a full review led by the subject leader and involving the headteacher, teaching staff and governors, to ensure that the policy is embedded in practice. The subject leader has the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating the subject and to support this process teachers are asked to return an appropriate pro forma based on their own work in RE to the subject leader each term. Collection of this information enables the subject leader to identify particular issues related to teaching and learning for feedback and the continuing professional development needs of teachers. A meeting, led by the subject leader to discuss provision, standards and strategies for improvement is held termly.

### ***Withdrawal***

We acknowledge the rights of parents to withdraw their child(ren) from RE and those of teachers\* to withdraw from teaching the subject. We aim to provide an open and inclusive curriculum which can be taught to all pupils, by all teachers. We do not, therefore, anticipate any requests for withdrawal. We do, however, have a procedure in place to deal with any questions or concerns from parents about RE or withdrawals which, should in the first instance, be raised with the subject leader, then referred to the headteacher. (There are no pupils withdrawn from RE at present).

**Subject link governor:**

**Subject leader:**

**Date:**

(This model policy is provided to support schools in developing their own policy for Religious Education)

- \* N.B. teachers in a voluntary Aided (Faith school) may be expected to teach Religious Education according to the faith requirements. Please check with your contract of employment