



**Policy Guidance for
Religious Education in
Staffordshire**
Non-statutory guidance

Contents

Policy Guidance For Religious Education In Staffordshire	4
What Should Be Happening In Your School? What does the law require?	5
RE And National Curriculum Aims The aims of the National Curriculum How religious education relates to the National Curriculum aims	6
Religious Education And The Values Underpinning The Curriculum	8
Spiritual And Moral Development	9
RE, Personal Development And 'Every Child Matters' Building personal development into the curriculum How religious education relates to personal development and Every Child Matters	10
New Opportunities Identified By The Review Of The National Curriculum (2008-2011)	12
Religious Education And Cross-Curriculum Dimensions	13
RE And Personal Learning And Thinking Skills	14
Identifying Pupils Who Are Gifted In RE	16
Assessment In RE	17
Religious Education And Inclusion	18
Religious Education And Community Cohesion	19
A Policy For Religious Education In Staffordshire Schools	20

Policy Guidance For Religious Education In Staffordshire

This document contains a range of supportive materials relating to policy and practice in religious education.

Many of these documents are drawn from national initiatives. Where this is the case, an internet link to the original site has been provided.

This document will also be available on line with more detailed links. Please check for updates in the electronic version at <http://education.staffordshire.gov.uk/Curriculum/Subjectareas/ReligiousEducation/>

For advice on how to implement the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus please see the appropriate guidance materials.

At the end of the document an outline policy has been included identifying the key principles which should be in place in all county schools.

INFORMATION

With the exception of 'What Should Be Happening In Your School?' these materials offer guidance and support and are non-statutory. 'The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education: Statutory Requirements' should be consulted for the legal position in the county.

What Should Be Happening In Your School?

What does the law require?

Religious Education (RE) should be provided as part of the basic curriculum for all registered pupils attending a maintained school. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE and are not obliged to state their reasons for withdrawal.

The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act (the 1998 Act) defined new categories of maintained schools; the rules about the provision of RE differ in some categories, as follows:

- **Community Schools**, including some of the old 'County' schools. RE should be taught according to the Agreed Syllabus of the LA.
- **Foundation Schools**, including some of the old 'County' schools and old 'Voluntary Controlled' schools which had been grant maintained. RE is taught according to the local Agreed Syllabus, unless the schools are of a religious character, in which case their RE is characterised by their Trust Deed.
- **Voluntary Aided schools** are those schools originally founded by voluntary bodies, but aided from public funds. RE should be taught according to their Trust Deed.
- **Voluntary Controlled schools** were originally founded by voluntary bodies, but are now controlled and entirely funded by the LA. RE should be taught according to the local Agreed Syllabus, but parents may request that RE should be provided in accordance with the Trust Deed.
- **Special schools** should provide RE for all their pupils as far as practicable, according to the status of the school.
- **City Technology Colleges** are independent schools; however, as a condition of grant, they are required to make provision for RE which is broadly in line with community schools.
- **Academies** are independent schools. Apart from the expectation that RE is provided as part of a broad and balanced curriculum there is no specification regarding the provision of pupils' entitlement to RE. 'Faith' Academies must consider all applications for places, according to the DCSF Code of Practice, but preference may be given to applicants of the particular faith.
- **Schools with Sixth Forms** must provide RE for all pupils in the sixth form in accordance with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.
- **Sixth Form Colleges** and **Further Education Colleges** should provide RE for all students who wish to receive it.

RE And National Curriculum Aims

From: QCA National Curriculum
QCA <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

The aims of the National Curriculum

Education influences and reflects the values of society, and the kind of society we want to be. It is important, therefore, to recognise a broad set of common purposes, values and aims that underpin the school curriculum and the work of schools. Clear aims that focus on the qualities and skills learners need to succeed in school and beyond should be the starting point for the curriculum. These aims should inform all aspects of curriculum planning and teaching and learning at whole-school and subject levels.

The curriculum should enable all young people to become:

- **successful learners** who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- **confident individuals** who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- **responsible citizens** who make a positive contribution to society.

How religious education relates to the National Curriculum Aims

Successful learners

RE helps to develop successful learners by asking life's largest questions and presenting interesting, important conceptual challenges to pupils. Learning about religion and learning from religion has the capacity to motivate and empower pupils, enabling them to enjoy and value learning.

By investigating beliefs and teachings, explaining practices, reflecting on questions of truth, analysing ideas and evaluating answers, pupils can enhance their skills and confidence as learners. Pupils are able to engage with spiritual and moral concepts, some of which may be new to them, by reflecting on, analysing, interpreting and evaluating sources, questions, practices or ideas. Understanding the complexity of questions about truth, meaning, purpose, identity, values or commitments and analysing possible answers can contribute to successful learning individually and collaboratively.

As pupils interpret sources and texts with increasing skill they begin to ask questions about truth and meaning and to understand the importance of communicating ideas accurately and respectfully. Applying vocabulary, explaining commitments, and evaluating beliefs enhance pupils' skills and confidence as group learners as they work with others to give expression to their understanding and response.

Confident individuals

RE helps to create confident individuals by promoting self-awareness and self-esteem as pupils articulate questions and explore responsibility. RE provides a forum for young people to voice their questions about identity and meaning, contributing to their personal development. It can inspire pupils to search for and deepen their sense of personal meaning in their lives. As young people reflect on ultimate questions and on the ideas and practices of belief systems they are helped to understand more about themselves and others and how to communicate. They are encouraged to develop their ideas and express them appropriately. They can use beliefs, practices and values to deal confidently with challenges and setbacks. Evaluating practices, ways of life and values empowers pupils to make informed choices. They learn to take increasing responsibility for their attitudes and actions.

These processes also strengthen pupils' realistic confidence in themselves and each other, and help them to make decisions with increasing autonomy and discernment. This enables them to deal with the demands of adult life sensitively and competently.

Responsible citizens

RE helps prepare pupils to become responsible citizens by raising issues of local, national and global concern and placing them in spiritual and moral contexts. By understanding the beliefs and practices of religions and world views, pupils can make connections between belief and action. Through considering the beliefs behind environmental action, the needs of refugees or the work of aid agencies, pupils can become aware of the connections between beliefs, lifestyles and ultimate questions. Understanding the right to hold different beliefs enables pupils to see diverse religions and beliefs as a significant part of the local, national and global community and of human experience. They can develop as reflective and responsible citizens in a plural society and global community, with a strong awareness of religious and ethical diversity.

By evaluating ethical issues and expressing views using reasoned arguments, pupils can enhance their capacity and desire to make a positive contribution to debates and decisions in society.

Religious Education And The Values Underpinning The Curriculum

Adapted from: QCA National Curriculum
QCA <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

Religious education should reflect the enduring values that contribute to personal development and equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a productive economy, and sustainable development.

These include values relating to:

- **the self**, recognising that we are unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development
- **relationships** as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others, and to the good of the community. We value others for themselves, not only for what they have or what they can do for us
- **the diversity in our society**, where truth, freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law and collective effort are valued for the common good. We value families, including families of different kinds, as sources of love and support for all their members, and as the basis of a society in which people care for others. We also value the contributions made to our society by a diverse range of people, cultures and heritages
- **the environment**, both natural and shaped by humanity, as the basis of life and a source of wonder and inspiration which needs to be protected.

At the same time, religious education must enable us to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly changing world in which we live and work. In particular, RE needs to engage with economic, social and cultural change, including the continued globalisation of the economy and society, with new work and leisure patterns and with the rapid expansion of communications technologies

Spiritual And Moral Development

Adapted from QCA National Curriculum
QCA <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

Spiritual and moral development is an essential part of personal development.

Spirituality includes beliefs, whether religious or not, the search for meaning or purpose, relationships, creativity, a sense of otherness, wonder and awe, self-knowledge, and feelings and emotions.

Spiritual development can be the process by which people acquire not only knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes about spirituality, but also the disposition to foster their own inner spirit, and to recognise it in others.

Morality includes values and principles, attitudes and behaviour, knowledge of social conventions and codes of conduct, and the ability to make decisions about right and wrong.

Moral development can be the process by which people develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes they need in order to make responsible moral decisions and act on them, and also the disposition to do what is right as a point of principle.

The spiritual and moral dimension is important not only as a legal requirement but also because of the way it enriches teaching and learning. In religious education, pupils will explore the particular convictions at the heart of religious traditions, spiritual insights and secular world views, making their own discoveries and formulating their own interpretations and values on issues, questions and experiences.

RE, Personal Development And 'Every Child Matters'

From: QCA National Curriculum
QCA <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

Building personal development into the curriculum

Personal development in school is the means by which all young people are supported in their spiritual, moral, physical, emotional, cultural and intellectual development according to their needs and regardless of their social and/or economic backgrounds. It promotes their well-being and enables them to develop their potential as healthy, enterprising and responsible citizens in our society.

An effective curriculum that supports personal development is one of the main ways in which a school can demonstrate its contribution to the 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) outcomes:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

These outcomes are reflected directly in the curriculum aims for young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens and this makes 'Every Child Matters' a fundamental feature of the curriculum. The personal, learning and thinking skills (see RE And Personal, Learning And Thinking Skills page 14) are also integral to the personal development of young people and the roles they take in life as family member, friend, neighbour, partner, parent, employee, employer, citizen and member of communities.

An effective curriculum will include a planned and coherent approach to personal development and ECM and be reflected in the ethos and values of the school. Every member of the school staff can contribute to personal development and therefore to the well-being of each young person in the school.

How religious education relates to personal development 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, for example, 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 well-being

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, 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.

New Opportunities Identified By The Review Of The National Curriculum (2008-2011)

Adapted from: QCA National Curriculum
QCA <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

The revisions of the national curriculum and of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus offer many opportunities to refresh and renew approaches to RE. There are real opportunities to ensure that RE fulfils its potential to challenge and inspire all learners with questions, concepts and processes matched to their capacity.

The new opportunities are:

A concept-led curriculum

The programme of learning is organised around six key concepts. Using key concepts as the basic structure and following the Staffordshire RE process (see The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education: Statutory Requirements) enables planners and teachers to build RE programmes that challenge and inspire the learner. Often these concepts will be presented as questions such as 'What does it mean to belong?' or 'Why are there different religions or beliefs?' Concepts and questions are powerful drivers. They engage learners with issues that are relevant, demanding and important. Choosing appropriate content to go with concepts remains a vital task for planners and teachers, enabling them to respond to their local contexts. By leading with concepts, choosing content accordingly and following the Staffordshire RE process teachers will enhance the relevance and appeal of RE.

Addressing the role of religion in the modern world

By including key concepts such as practices and ways of life and values and commitments the programmes of learning enable teachers to pose questions about the role of religion in the modern world. The concepts can be used to explore the positive achievement of religion, spiritual insights and secular perspectives in the development and functioning of political structures, in attitudes to the environment and in scientific and cultural progress in the development of society. In RE learning experiences help young people to recognise the impact of religion and beliefs on the world and to move beyond simplistic positions.

Working creatively with other subjects

The RE programmes of learning support teachers to identify opportunities for appropriate inter-disciplinary collaboration. For example, learners could explore identity at personal, local, national and global levels in citizenship and personal wellbeing as well as in RE. Collaboration should be based on shared concepts or substantial content, rather than superficial and identical aspects of content.

Religious Education And Cross-Curriculum Dimensions

Adapted from: QCA National Curriculum
QCA <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

To achieve the aims of the curriculum, religious education offers young people opportunities to understand themselves and the world in which they live. Cross-curriculum dimensions provide important unifying areas of learning that help young people make sense of the world and give education relevance and authenticity. They reflect the major ideas and challenges that face individuals and society, including those presented by belief, spiritual insights and secular world views.

Dimensions can add a richness and relevance to the curriculum experience of young people. They can provide a focus for work within and between subjects and across the curriculum as a whole, including the routines, events and ethos of the school.

Cross-curriculum dimensions include:

- identity and cultural diversity
- healthy lifestyles
- community participation
- enterprise
- global dimension and sustainable development
- technology and the media
- creativity and critical thinking.

Using dimensions in RE

Teachers of religious education will find the dimensions useful in designing and planning their wider curriculum. Individual dimensions should not be considered in isolation as they are often interdependent and mutually supportive. For example, there are links between 'identity and cultural diversity' and 'global dimension and sustainable development', and between 'creativity and critical thinking' and 'technology and the media', in all of which there is a role for RE.

Subject leaders will find many different ways to build cross-curriculum dimensions into their curriculum. These include:

- teaching the dimensions through RE, with links across subjects being made where there are common issues or areas of learning
- specifically timetabled thematic days, activity weeks or events that focus on a particular dimension to which RE contributes
- activities that are integrated into the routines of the school, such as running a mini-enterprise or arranging a fundraising event
- educational visits or out of hours learning opportunities
- using experts from outside of the school to stimulate discussion and debate in assemblies or with specific groups of learners.

Teachers are encouraged to build the dimensions into their planning in a way that reflects the specific needs, interests and context of their learners in religious education.

RE And Personal Learning And Thinking Skills

Adapted from: QCA National Curriculum
QCA <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

The national curriculum focuses on developing the skills and qualities that learners need to succeed in school and the broader community. The development of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) is essential to meeting the three national curriculum aims of becoming successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. The individual subjects, which make up the curriculum, provide the essential range of activities, learning opportunities and contexts essential for the effective development of these skills (PLTS).

The framework comprises six PLTS:

- independent enquirers
- creative thinkers
- team workers
- self-managers
- effective participators
- reflective learners.

PLTS underpin the whole curriculum and can transform young people's engagement with learning. They support learners' understanding of themselves as well as their relationship with others and the world around them. Effective development of PLTS can raise achievement and make a considerable impact on learners' ability to succeed, both now and in adult life.

How religious education relates to Personal Learning and Thinking Skills

The Agreed Syllabus programmes of learning provide a rich and exciting range of opportunities to develop PLTS as an integral part of subject teaching and learning. Explicit and implicit opportunities are present in the key concepts, key processes, range and content, and curriculum opportunities.

Independent enquirers

Learners can develop as independent enquirers when they are provided with opportunities in religious education to:

- structure their own investigations, researching answers to different types of questions, issues or problems that they have identified for themselves, for example about the impact and the influence of religion and/or a belief
- explore issues from a personal perspective by gathering, analysing and evaluating evidence to reach their own, well-reasoned decisions and conclusions about beliefs and values
- investigate with increasing independence and apply what they have learned to develop their own answers to more complex questions.

Creative thinkers

Learners can develop as creative thinkers when they are provided with opportunities in religious education to:

- generate their own ideas and explore possibilities of how a belief or ideal could apply to their life and the lives of others
- connect with their experiences and those of others to inform answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues
- question their own and others' assumptions and use reasoned arguments to express insights and beliefs for themselves
- develop their confidence to challenge assumptions and construct imaginative solutions to issues or problems.

Team workers

Learners can develop as team workers when they are provided with opportunities in religious education to:

- discuss their own ideas and experiences, inviting everyone's views on an equal basis and using diplomacy to present opinions and responses
- recognise their own strengths and those of others to allocate roles and tasks, and take responsibility for their own contribution, for example to organise visits, plan investigations or prepare presentations
- extend their understanding of different beliefs, practices and ways of life of others, for example by using modern communications systems to work with different schools, people and countries
- provide and respond to constructive feedback to complete tasks, developing the confidence to resolve issues and achieve their identified goals

Self-managers

Learners can develop as self-managers when they are provided with opportunities in religious education to:

- take personal responsibility for organising their time and resources, prioritising actions and managing risks to carry out and complete a task, for example an investigation of a religious community of local significance carried out over several weeks
- address challenging issues and tasks, for example those that may evoke strong emotional reactions in them or require a sensitive approach
- consider and recognise what is meant by 'appropriate behaviour' in different contexts, for example in workplaces, religious centres and meetings
- respond positively to new or changing priorities, for example actively embracing the challenges of investigating new ideas or issues.

Effective participators

Learners can develop as effective participators when they are provided with opportunities in religious education to:

- engage personally with questions of belief and issues of religion relevant to their own lives, for example issues such as suffering or discrimination
- encounter and question diverse communities and contribute their own views and experiences, for example in visiting places of religious significance or questioning invited speakers
- explore for themselves how religious and non-religious approaches can make a difference to issues, for example of conflict, environment and lifestyles
- consider alternatives and act as an advocate for views and beliefs, including those that may differ from their own.

Reflective learners

Learners can develop as reflective learners when they are provided with opportunities in religious education to:

- invite and reflect on feedback from others to monitor and improve on their performance
- reflect on and express their beliefs, attitudes, pre-suppositions and values in the light of their learning about religions and beliefs, including how their own beliefs or attitudes may have changed
- identify and plan for their own realistic goals, recognising how adapting and refining their ideas as work progresses can make for enhanced outcomes
- select and use a range of ways to communicate ideas and responses, for example in encountering people from different religious, cultural and philosophical groups or in visiting places of religious significance

Identifying Pupils Who Are Gifted In RE

From: QCA Identifying gifted pupils
QCA <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>

Pupils who are gifted in RE are likely to:

- show high levels of insight into, and discernment beyond, the obvious and ordinary
- make sense of, and draw meaning from, religious symbols, metaphors, texts and practices
- be sensitive to, or aware of, the numinous or the mystery of life, and have a feeling for how these are explored and expressed
- understand, apply and transfer ideas and concepts across topics in RE and into other religious and cultural contexts.

In more general terms, they may also:

- have highly-developed skills of comprehension, analysis and research
- show quickness of understanding and depth of thought.

The identification of pupils who are gifted in RE should be approached on the basis of distinct RE ability, skills, competencies and insights. The teacher's professional judgement is crucial. RE teachers who know their pupils and their work, and bring professional talent, expertise and awareness to the subject, are best placed to identify gifted pupils. However, especially if not RE specialists themselves, they will probably find it helpful to talk to other teachers.

Giftedness in RE is not the same as being religiously gifted. Teachers may find it helpful to consider how being gifted in RE compares with being gifted in sport, music, mathematics or poetry.

Some pupils with good ability in RE do less well in other subjects. These pupils may be nurtured within a faith community or have a religious or insightful world view of their own, bringing particular knowledge, sensitivity and experience to RE. Some pupils might have particular spiritual giftedness, whether or not they are part of a religious tradition. These pupils can generally be identified through discussion, held within an ethos of respect, which can also be used to stimulate further learning and progress.

Out of school activities also have a role to play in identifying pupils who are gifted in RE.

Assessment In RE

Although not part of the legal requirement, the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) strongly recommends that:

- sufficient evidence of pupils' achievements is recorded to allow for an overall 'best fit' level to be assigned to each pupil at the end of each year
- on transfer from key stage to key stage or school to school, teachers are able to provide the following information:
 - ✓ a long term plan identifying how the Programme of Study has been delivered during the key stage
 - ✓ a best fit level for each pupil

Religious education should be reported on annually in accordance with current legislation.

INFORMATION

Further information about assessment, the use of levels, recording and reporting can be found in the guidance materials supporting the Agreed Syllabus.

Religious Education And Inclusion

Planning for inclusion means thinking about shaping the curriculum to match the needs and interests of the full range of learners.

These include:

- the gifted and talented
- those with special educational needs and disabilities
- pupils who have English as a second language
- the different needs of boys and girls.

Pupils will also bring to school a range of cultural perspectives and experiences, which can be reflected in the curriculum and used to further pupils' understanding of the importance of the issues of diversity.

An inclusive curriculum is one where:

- different groups of pupils are all able to see the relevance of the curriculum to their own experiences and aspirations
- all pupils, regardless of ability, have sufficient opportunities to succeed in their learning at the highest standard.

It is important that the full range and scope of RE activities and learning experiences give pupils access to high levels of attainment. When planning activities, teachers will need to be sensitive to pupils' preferred learning styles and give them a variety of opportunities to learn. When identifying assessment opportunities, planning needs to ensure that all pupils are able to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

RE requires pupils to study a range of aspects of the subject and to gain an appreciation of the religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of life and society. By offering breadth of experience as identified in the Agreed Syllabus, schools will give pupils with different interests and aptitudes opportunities to engage with the subject and forge connections within RE and across the curriculum.

Opportunities that pupils can relate to their own experience and communities are important, as are those that extend their knowledge and understanding to other beliefs and practices. Attention to the presentation of resources and the topics taught will enable pupils to challenge misinformation, misinterpretation and simplistic stereotypes. This is important when accommodating the different learning needs of pupils with diverse social and cultural backgrounds and a variety of lifestyles.

Religious Education And Community Cohesion

From DCSF Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion July 2007

What is community cohesion?

Schools have a duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different groups

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a **common vision** and **sense of belonging** by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar **life opportunities** are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

From Alan Brine HMI

http://news.reonline.org.uk/rem_art21.php

Religious Education provides a key context for children and young people to develop their understanding and appreciation of diversity through the study of religious and non-religious beliefs. It helps to promote shared values, respect for all, and to challenge racism and discrimination. In many schools this is achieved by providing a high quality classroom experience of RE enriched by opportunities to visit and meet with representatives from communities of religions and non-religious beliefs in the local area.

Good RE will promote community cohesion at each of the four levels outlined in DCSF guidance:

- the *school community* - RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values within the school community can be celebrated and explored
- the *community within which the school is located* - RE provides opportunities to investigate the patterns of diversity of religions and non-religious beliefs within the local area. It is an important context within which links can be forged with different religious and non-religious communities in the local community
- the *UK community* - a major focus of RE is the study of the diversity of religions and non-religious beliefs which exists within the UK and how this diversity influences national life
- the *global community* - RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religions and non-religious beliefs and its impact on world issues.

Where RE provides an effective context to promote community cohesion it has a focus on 'securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, and of different socio-economic statuses, abilities and interests, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential'. (*DCFS Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion July 2007 DCSF-00598-2007*). In order to achieve high standards, pupils' progress in the subject should be monitored carefully and any under-achievement by particular groups tackled

A Policy For Religious Education In Staffordshire Schools

'The school' here is taken to mean those responsible for policy decisions including governors, staff and parents as appropriate.

Policy Statement	School Provision
Commitment	
The school is committed to the teaching of religious education as an important subject in its own right and because of the contribution it makes to other aspects of the school's curriculum and ethos.	
Entitlement	
All pupils on the school roll will receive RE as their entitlement in accordance with legal requirements.	
Agreed Syllabus	
The school will meet the requirements of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus and will provide adequate time and resources to do so.	
Management	
The school will identify a subject leader for RE and will ensure that the subject leader is appropriately supported to manage subject developments effectively.	
Staffing	
The school will ensure that all staff involved with religious education are aware of subject requirements and are appropriately supported to teach the subject in an interesting and challenging way.	

Cont>

Policy Statement	School Provision
Accommodation	
Where relevant, appropriate accommodation will be provided to secure the delivery of high quality RE.	
Planning	
The school will ensure that long term planning shows how the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are being met. Medium term planning will indicate how the RE process and attainment target are addressed.	
Assessment	
The school will make use of the Staffordshire levels to give a 'best fit' assessment of each pupil at the end of each year/key stage.	
Transfer Information	
The school will provide establishments in the next phase with copies of long term planning and 'best fit' levels for each pupil as appropriate.	
Resources Including Capitation	
The school will support the teaching of stimulating and challenging RE with good quality resources.	

Policy Statement	School Provision
Monitoring	
The subject leader will be supported to monitor and develop the subject in keeping with the school's policy	
Professional Development	
The school will ensure that all teachers involved in the delivery of RE will receive professional development matched to their needs.	
Inclusion	
The school will ensure that RE is inclusive in its content and approach.	
Withdrawal	
Where a request to withdraw pupils from RE is received, the school will ensure that discussions take place and appropriate action is agreed.	

Notes

Quality Learning Services
School Improvement Division
Kingston Centre
Fairway
Stafford
ST16 3TW

Tel: 01785 277932
Fax: 01785 256193
Email: qls@staffordshire.gov.uk

www.qls.org.uk



© 2009 Staffordshire County Council

Staffordshire schools may reproduce content for non commercial purposes providing the source is acknowledged. If you, or someone you know would like a copy of this publication in large print, braille, in audio format or in languages other than English, please call 01785 277932.