

**Non - Statutory Guidance for the**

**Kent Agreed Syllabus 2017-2022**

**Learning Across the Curriculum**

## **Promoting Key Skills**

Work in Religious Education (RE) should also promote key skills, the prime purpose of which is to enhance the quality of learning in the subject.

### **Communication**

In RE, children encounter a range of distinctive forms of written and spoken language, including sacred texts, stories, history, poetry, creeds, liturgy and worship. These are powerful uses of language, linked to fundamental human needs and aspirations.

RE has distinctive concepts and terminology, which stimulate children to use their language skills to reflect on their own experiences, and to help them understand and appreciate their cultural backgrounds.

In particular, children learn to talk and write with knowledge and understanding about religious and other beliefs and values; to discuss many of the fundamental questions of life; to construct reasoned arguments; to think reflectively and critically about spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues; and to present information and ideas about these issues in words and symbols. Moreover, RE emphasises that truly effective communication also includes an empathetic understanding of people and the issues that concern them

### **Information technology**

RE provides opportunities for children to use and develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. In particular, ICT can support the activities of finding information about beliefs, teachings and practices and their impact on individuals, communities and cultures. ICT can help children to communicate and exchange information and understanding with others and to investigate and record data. Many faith communities use ICT on a worldwide basis

### **Working with others**

RE provides opportunities for children to work co-operatively, sharing ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices and learning from each other

### **Improving own learning and performance**

RE includes learning about taking responsibility for oneself and others. The beliefs and values studied are the foundation for personal integrity and choice. Such study is personally challenging and relevant to many aspects of learning and achievement throughout life, including future careers

### **Problem solving**

RE deals with religious and moral beliefs and values that underpin individual problem solving and decision-making. Examples include the areas of sexual relationships, bringing up children, striving for ideas, and facing bereavement.

## **Attitudes**

In addition to what are termed 'general educational attitudes' there are some **attitudes** that are fundamental to Religious Education and absolutely necessary if students are to enter fully into the study of religion and learn from that experience. These include:

### **Self-understanding**

- developing a mature sense of identity, self-worth and value
- developing the capacity to discern the personal relevance of religious questions
- developing self-confidence, allowing recognition that there are a variety of ways of expressing beliefs and ideas
- developing a set of personal values on which to base moral and ethical decisions

### **Enquiry**

- curiosity and a desire to seek after truth
- developing personal interest in ultimate and metaphysical questions
- an ability to live with ambiguities and paradox
- the desire to search for the meaning of life
- being prepared to reconsider existing views
- being prepared to acknowledge bias and prejudice in oneself
- willingness to value insight and imagination as ways of perceiving reality
- perceiving a sense of mystery in the world

### **Commitment**

- understanding the importance of commitment to a set of values by which to live one's life
- willingness to develop a positive approach to life
- the ability to learn, while living with certainty and uncertainty

### **Fairness**

- listening to the views of other people without prejudging one's response
- careful consideration of other people's views
- willingness to consider evidence, experience and argument
- readiness to look beyond surface impressions
- an 'openness' which recognises that many issues concerned with beliefs and values are by nature controversial and ambiguous

### **Respect**

- respecting those who have different beliefs and customs from oneself
- recognising the rights and freedom of other people to hold their own views
- avoidance of ridicule of other people or their beliefs and way of life
- discerning between what is worthy of respect and what is not
- a willingness to learn from the insights of other people
- appreciation that people's religious convictions are often deeply felt
- recognising the needs, feelings, concerns and desires of others

## **Promoting Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development through Religious Education**

Religious Education (RE), has a crucial role to play if the overall purposes of the school curriculum, as set out in National Curriculum documents, are to be fulfilled, particularly in areas of pupils' personal development. The whole curriculum will contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but RE should take a leading role as it can offer a wide range of opportunities. RE is concerned with distinctive ways in which human beings express their understanding and interpret their experience of life, therefore it is uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to the personal development of pupils.

### **Spiritual Development: Kent SACRE's definition:**

Spiritual development is the concern to develop the most distinctive and desirable capacities of the human person, i.e. those capacities that, above all, distinguish human beings from other living creatures. It is a concern which goes beyond what children and young people know and do and relates to what sort of person they are and are becoming. It is thus essentially to do with a child's or young person's '**being and becoming**' – their wellbeing.

Certain features of this definition should be noted:

- it is deliberately **inclusive** with a focus on the spiritual development of all irrespective of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, social background or ability. It is about and for every child and young person
- it has at its heart the **all-round personal development** of the child or young person – academic, mental, physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural, encouraging them to develop values by which to live and virtues that support and form character. It aims to support and develop spiritual awareness and self-esteem
- it involves the nurture of particular **spiritual values** which requires a school to make choices about the **human capacities** it wishes to emphasise and develop. The choices made have a **moral dimension**. For example a capacity such as empathy, will be encouraged whilst another, such as indifference to human need, will be discouraged

### **Characteristics of spiritual development include:**

- reflection on a range of personal and human questions and experiences
- exploration of one's inner being and life, to develop a personal identity and insight into one's 'self' and essence
- exploration of life's fundamental, ultimate questions and a willingness to engage with these, to try to answer them and give life meaning and purpose
- exploration of meaning of the sacred; developing a sense of 'something other' and awareness of profound experiences which can be defining movements in life
- encounter with the responses of faith and believers to life's questions and mysteries and consideration of how these might inform or not one's own responses

**Within the school and classrooms, particularly those of RE, spiritual development can be cultivated by providing opportunities for:**

- reflection and quiet times, eg through learning from worship, prayer, meditation, celebrations, remembrance, repentance and forgiveness etc. Activities such as visits to places of worship, visitors from faith communities and experiential activities such as guided or imaginative work
- use of silence and listening to one's inner voice to creatively promote awareness of the sacred
- using imagination eg. through activities which encourage expression of inner thoughts, feelings and ideas, including art, poetry, drama, dance and music
- valuing the 'inner life' – recognition of one's personal capacity to have thoughts, emotions, hopes, fears, beliefs and of the hidden depths, secrets and mysteries which lie within us – eg. through studying stories from religious traditions of faith and action which would explore themes such as hope, courage, commitment, motivation, giving and love
- experiencing 'gobsmacking' moments of awe and developing sensitivity and awareness through drawing attention to the wonders around us eg in the natural world, through scientific study, in mathematics and in the power of music and poetry to move or inspire people
- developing a sense of self-worth and self-esteem through exploration of religious beliefs concerning the value of people and human life eg. in the Christian concept of salvation – an affirmation of the value of human beings to God
- exploring questions of meaning and purpose through consideration of ultimate questions such as Who am I? Why do we die? Why do things happen to me? Why is life unfair? Why is there evil and suffering in the world? Questions may well arise from pupils' own experiences of birth, growth, change, the beginning and breaking of relationships, loss and death

### **Moral Development**

Like 'spiritual' **moral development** cannot be defined by one simple statement but involves several elements:

- the will to **behave morally** as a **point of principle**
- knowledge of the **codes of conduct agreed by society** - accepted ways of behaving (here it links strongly with social and cultural development)
- considering **behaviour** in the light of its **impact on others** (here it links strongly with spiritual and social development)
- understanding of the **criteria needed to make moral judgements**
- the **ability to make judgements on moral issues**.

In summary: 'Moral development is knowing what is right and wrong and acting upon it as applicable'.

**Within the school and classrooms, particularly those of RE, moral development can be cultivated by providing opportunities for developing:**

- personal values in relation to self and others eg. self-knowledge, self-control, taking responsibility for self and others
- awareness of feelings which motivate action eg. love, joy, compassion, gratitude, anger, frustration, hatred, greed and envy
- human qualities eg. love, sensitivity, concern, co-operation, respect for people and property
- understanding of commitment and responsibility
- understanding of human nature and experience eg. in the context of good v evil, pleasure and pain, suffering and well-being, hope and despair
- understanding of moral decision making and the rationale underpinning our judgements of what is right and wrong
- a sense of justice, fairness, moral 'rightness' and moral 'oughtness'
- an understanding of the situations of those less fortunate than themselves and a concern for equity and their well-being

**Social development** is about helping children and young people develop the necessary skills and attributes to:

- **take responsibility** - for themselves and for others. Relationships are important and relating well to others is both a prerequisite and an effect of social development
- **take the initiative** and develop an understanding of both **rights and responsibilities**
- **understand** what it means to **live within and as a part of a community** and make a **positive contribution** to the life of school and to wider society. This links explicitly with the aims of the curriculum - being a 'responsible citizen'. It implies the acceptance and appropriate challenging of group norms/rules and the ability to see oneself as part of that group.

**Within the school and classrooms, particularly those of RE, social development can be cultivated by providing opportunities for:**

- developing understanding and practice of commitment, eg. through exploring the teaching of world faiths on concepts such as love, marriage, family, friendship and commitment to God and exploration of the motivation of those who are committed to a cause
- exploring celebration and thanksgiving eg. how celebration focuses the attention of groups on their shared values and life together, exemplified by eg religious festivals. Consideration of our national and social life through exploring what we as a nation celebrate eg. Remembrance, sporting and cultural achievement and services to communities and / or the nation
- exploring religious teachings on social issues and the values and attitudes which underpin these such as care and concern for those weaker and less fortunate – the vulnerable, the young, old, sick and poor
- understanding the relationship between religion and politics, Church and State eg. through exploration of situations where faith groups challenge or motivate political decision-making and change or where leaders seek political control over religion eg.

through study of issues such as world poverty and debt and the global environment and of individuals such as Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King.

**Cultural development** involves:

- the **appreciation** of **one's own** and of **other cultural tradition(s)**
- **valuing** and **celebrating** a **range of traditions and life-styles**
- **widening horizons** and **deepening understanding** of the **norms** and **ways of life** of others.

It is:

- **wide-ranging** – including arts, crafts, music, literature, food, festivals and celebrations, religion, age, gender etc
- linked with **self-knowledge** and **self-esteem** as well as the **acceptance** and **valuing of others**.

Cultural development opportunities need to take into consideration the pupils'/students' own background(s) and address other cultural backgrounds. There is sometimes confusion between **religion, ethnicity** and **culture**. Each relates to the other and the demarcation lines are not always clear

**Within the school and classrooms, particularly those of RE, cultural development can be cultivated by providing opportunities for:**

- exploring cultural responses to questions arising from human existence ie. questions of identity, origin, meaning, purpose, destiny, value and ethics
- understanding the cultural influences from dimensions such as the religious, social, aesthetic, ethnic and political which bear upon us
- expressing meaning through eg. use of arts, symbols, artefacts, community and leisure activities
- building a sense of community eg. friendship groups within the school and the wider community. This might be developed by studying the beliefs, values, attitudes and lifestyle associated with particular religious and cultural identities and choices
- developing respect for and appreciation of diversity eg. through developing sensitivity to and awareness of their own and others' feelings, history, forms of expression and symbols; the varied needs and interests of people, the importance of commitment to the common good and well being of all and a commitment to challenging and reducing prejudice, discrimination, intolerance and bigotry.

In addition to the clear and valid expectation laid upon RE in this matter, opportunities for the development and cultivation of pupils' spiritual and moral development should be evident across the whole curriculum. In each curriculum area, as well as the presence of implicit though identifiable opportunities, there should also from time to time be explicit, planned attempts to introduce and relate spiritual, moral and religious questions, concepts, ideas and understandings to appropriate subject issues. Such an approach demonstrates an awareness of the need for all to be responsible for and involved in the cultivation of these aspects of pupils' personal development and that the school is addressing this matter collectively and coherently.

## Religious Education and Community Cohesion

'Every school - whatever its intake and wherever it is located - is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of cultures, religions or beliefs, ethnicities and social backgrounds.'  
(*DCSF Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion July 2007 DCSF-00598-2007*)

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.

(*DCSF Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion July 2007 DCSF-00598-2007*)

The requirement on schools from September 2007 to promote community cohesion makes this aspiration particularly significant. From September 2008 Ofsted has included community cohesion as an important focus of Section 5 school inspections.

Religious Education (RE) 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.

Survey evidence suggested that RE is making a good or outstanding contribution towards community cohesion and this is now one of the distinctive strengths of the subject. In most schools, pupils were clear RE was one of the main contexts in which to develop their understanding of diversity and the importance of respect towards others - key threads of community cohesion. In some cases, pupils spoke powerfully about the way RE teachers were models of anti-racist attitudes in the school.

In most schools in the survey **RE was making a significant impact** on pupils' understanding of, and attitudes towards, religious and cultural diversity. Pupils recognised two aspects of RE as important. First, RE provides much of the knowledge and understanding essential to an appreciation of diversity and the impact of faith in people's lives. Second, RE was a 'rare' opportunity to express opinions and explore ideas and matters relevant to community cohesion.

**In the best cases**, schools had given careful thought to the way the subject can contribute to the promotion of community cohesion and had audited its impact alongside that of other subjects. Occasionally this work linked to wider involvement with interfaith networks or local authority and SACRE initiatives, although this was rare.

In some of these, RE additionally provided an important context for building bridges into the local community as part of the school's wider commitment to engagement and extended services.

**Examples of good practice seen in schools include:**

- providing opportunities to explore controversial issues related to religion and belief in the modern world - including misrepresentations of religion in the media
- providing opportunities for representatives of 'hard to reach' religious communities to work with the school and develop confidence that their traditions were respected
- providing opportunities for pupils with strong religious and belief commitments to share their experience in a safe context and see that their faith is valued and respected
- providing enrichment activities, including fieldwork and visitors, designed as opportunities for first hand engagement with diversity of religion and belief in the local area.

### **Successful approaches linking RE to community cohesion.**

- 'Off-timetable' theme days or assemblies related to, for example, Holocaust Memorial Day, often working in partnership with other subjects, most notably, citizenship. In one school the headteacher had used RE as a context for analysing patterns of religious/cultural diversity in the area, forging links with local mosques and between mosques and local churches, using these links to develop extended school and family learning opportunities.
- A school with a white mono-cultural intake had twinned with a school with a high percentage of pupils from the Muslim tradition to extend the curriculum enrichment opportunities for RE.
- Using focussed RE theme days to extend opportunities for pupils to explore cultural diversity in more depth, using visitors.
- A school in another white mono-cultural area which had investigated the range of parents with 'global' experience and invited them to contribute to RE and beyond. Another had built links through a local interfaith network project.

In order to **evaluate the way RE is contributing to this important aspect of school life**, schools might consider the following questions.

- Do pupils value the subject and do they recognise the contribution it makes to their understanding of different communities and ways of life?
- Do pupils have real opportunities to explore and gain first-hand experience of diversity of religion, belief and culture?
- Does RE provide a context to build relationships with the communities in the local area and particularly those groups who might be hard to reach?
- Does RE provide a voice for minority groups within the school, developing a culture of mutual respect and harmony?
- Does the school treat religions and non-religious beliefs seriously and model ways of building respect?
- Does the school know enough about the diversity of religions and non-religious beliefs within the local community and does it explore ways of making links with those communities?
- If the school is mono-cultural, how well is RE working to foster a broader awareness of cultural and religious diversity?
- Is the school providing enough opportunities for fieldwork and enrichment activities to extend the potential of RE to promote community cohesion?

## **Promoting Citizenship and Personal, Social, and Health Education through Religious Education**

Religious Education (RE), Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship Education are all concerned with aspects of the education and development of the whole person and each has its own particular contribution to make. Through its distinctive subject matter, the RE curriculum will make a key contribution to pupils' personal development generally but also to schools' provision for PSHE and Citizenship, for example by providing opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

RE deals with, for example, the religious and moral beliefs and values that underpin personal choices and behaviour, eg. relationships; social policies and practices; crime and punishment; concepts and patterns of health, for example use of drugs. RE provides opportunities for the development of active citizenship and involvement in society eg. through looking at the voluntary and charitable activities that contribute to a healthy society.

Beliefs about the nature of humanity and the world influence how we organise ourselves and relate to others locally, nationally and globally. Issues in RE therefore contribute to social and political awareness, eg. rights and responsibilities. RE also contributes to pupils' understanding of Europe and the world. Religious and moral issues are worldwide and it is not possible to understand the nature and significance of European identity without studying religion.

RE promotes the values and attitudes needed for citizenship in a democratic society by helping pupils to understand and respect people of different beliefs, practices, races and cultures. Similarities and differences in commitment, self-understanding and the search for truth and meaning can be recognised, respected and valued for the common good.

Each school is responsible for developing curricular programmes for RE, PSHE and Citizenship but it is not appropriate for them to be taught together. Apart from fundamental educational and developmental reasons, such provision will not meet statutory curriculum requirements.

RE taught according to the Kent agreed syllabus will be able to make a contribution to Citizenship and PSHE. The requirements for learning about religions and learning from religion will guide planning and therefore contributions to pupils' personal and social development.

The four inter-related sections of PSHE and Citizenship at key stages 1&2 share some common elements with RE, including:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities
- preparing to play an active role as citizens
- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle
- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people

### **PSHE at Key Stages 3 & 4**

PSHE comprises all aspects of a school's planned provision to promote the personal and social development of pupils, including their health and well being. The knowledge, skills and understanding for PSHE are organised in three inter-related sections and RE plays a significant part in promoting these, for example:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities **by learning about what is fair and unfair, moral decision making, and being**

**encouraged to share and justify their opinions**

- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle **by being taught about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality, 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 being taught 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 with beliefs, views and lifestyles that are different from their own**

**RE plays a significant part in promoting Citizenship through, for example:**

- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding regarding 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 nature of civic obligation and national loyalty and the bases for wider international obligations
- enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about such issues, problems and events

RE contributes to pupils' PSHE and Citizenship development implicitly through both the content and activities of many of the units of study.