

RE and promoting key skills

The prime purpose of using key skills in RE should be to enhance the quality of learning in RE.

Communication and literacy skills in RE

In RE, pupils encounter and use 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 pupils to use their language skills to reflect on their own experiences, and to help them understand and appreciate their cultural backgrounds.

In particular, pupils develop literacy skills by learning 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. Extended writing based on higher order thinking is a growing part of RE as pupils get older. More than this, RE emphasises that truly effective communication also includes an empathetic understanding of people and the issues that concern them.

Information and communication technology in RE

RE provides opportunities for pupils 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 pupils to communicate and exchange information and understanding with others and to investigate and record data.

Working with others in RE

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

Improving your own learning and performance in RE

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 in RE

RE deals with religious and moral beliefs and values that underpin the ways in which individuals solve problems and make decisions. Examples include the areas of sexual relationships, bringing up children, striving for ideals, the good use of money and facing bereavement.

Promoting other aspects of the curriculum

Thinking skills in RE

RE is an academic subject, based on learning about and understanding Christianity and the other principal religions of Great Britain. The study of religion is a rigorous activity involving a variety of intellectual disciplines and skills. These include studying the sacred texts of the world; understanding the development, history and contemporary forms of believing; studying philosophy and ethics; and undertaking phenomenological, psychological and sociological studies in religion. Skills of research, selection, analysis, interpretation, reflection, empathy, discernment, evaluation, synthesis, application, expression and communication are promoted.

Financial capability through RE

RE deals with the issues of the value and proper use of personal property, including money. These include means of acquisition, responsible use, taking care of others and giving to charity.

Enterprise education in RE

How and why human beings work for themselves and others is a fundamental question of beliefs and values, to which learning in RE makes a contribution in its study of religions and other belief systems.

Creative thinking skills in RE

The range of beliefs and values studied in RE cover questions of human nature and personality, personal fulfilment and vocation, sources of inspiration and discovery, and the connection between beliefs, values and the arts.

Education for sustainable development in RE

How human beings treat each other and their environment and use the world's resources depends on their understanding both of the world's and their own significance. Such significance is reflected in the beliefs and stories about the origin and value of life.

Religious education and the general teaching requirements

Good teaching and learning for all pupils, but particularly those with AEN, makes use of multi-sensory strategies involving physical, visual and tactile stimuli to engage pupils' active participation and response in lessons. Good teaching and learning is sensitive to varied learning styles.

Religious education and inclusion

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

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

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

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

Providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils in religious education

Religious education should be accessible to *all* pupils.

The National Curriculum sets out three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

1. Setting suitable learning challenges.
2. Responding to pupils' diverse needs.
3. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

1. Setting suitable learning challenges

This Agreed Syllabus sets out what pupils should learn at each key stage.

Teachers should teach the knowledge, understanding and skills in ways which suit their pupils' abilities and needs.

This means:

- setting differentiated tasks to take account of the needs of those pupils whose attainments fall below or significantly exceed the expectations for the age group;

- using a variety of teaching and learning strategies, taking account, wherever possible, of pupils' preferred learning styles;
- using appropriate assessment approaches which allow for different learning styles;
- setting targets for learning
- providing opportunities for pupil responses in ways which they initiate for themselves

2. Responding to the diverse needs pupils bring to their learning

The aims of RE apply to *all* pupils.

When planning, teachers need to provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve, including:

- boys and girls;
- pupils with special educational needs, including the gifted and talented;
- those with disabilities;
- looked after children;
- pupils from different social, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The religious and belief backgrounds of pupils

The different experiences, interests and strengths that pupils bring are particularly relevant in religious education. Some are active and committed within faith communities, some have occasional contact and others have no links at all. Teachers will need to take account of

these differing religious backgrounds, plan to meet the needs of individuals and acknowledge and respect the beliefs and practices in the home and family.

3. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

RE and pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

RE is a statutory part of the core curriculum for *all* pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Pupils with AEN are found in all contexts and all teachers are teachers of AEN. Good quality teaching in RE will tailor the syllabus carefully to the special needs of all pupils. Pupils with additional educational needs will not always reach Level 1 of the expectations in RE. Where appropriate the 'P' scales may be used as an indicator for progress within RE. Work relating to the programmes of study that is planned for pupils with special educational needs should take account of the targets and recommendations in their Individual Educational Programmes.

For the small number of pupils who may need the provision, material may be selected from earlier or later key stages where this is necessary to enable individual pupils to progress and

demonstrate achievement. Such material should be presented in contexts suitable to the pupil's age. In making decisions about adjusting the content of the key stage, teachers should take into account the previous experience of the pupil as well as the necessity to communicate the variations in their entitlement to subsequent teachers.