



6.1 Approaching World Faiths: An Overview

Within religious education there is an inevitable tension between the two words 'religious' and 'education'. Historically it has always been the case that people were inducted into a particular faith community, not religiously educated in a range of faiths.

When the subject began to develop a truly educational rationale, it did so by distancing itself from its subject matter - religion. This led to an approach which emphasised learning about religions but was wary of any suggestion that pupils might learn from the religions they studied.

If, however, our concern is to facilitate the personal search of our pupils, we must expect that they will learn from the world faiths as well as learning about them. What we are trying to achieve in pupils has been described as critical solidarity - an ability to stand alongside the members of a faith community while still retaining objectivity.

As religious educators we tread a tightrope between engagement and objectivity. We must see faiths as an insider would see them and retain the ability as educators to make judgements as to what, from which faiths, would offer our pupils the greatest possibilities for personal growth.

Selection and treatment

The key issues regard the selection and treatment of materials from the faith communities.

Even where the content has been tightly prescribed by the syllabus, there may be many different ways of treating it.

In Islam, for example, a treatment of hajj which focuses on the spiritual growth such a journey can inspire will be much more effective than one which concentrates almost entirely on mechanical details.

In deciding on the selection of material and its treatment, there are two criteria to be considered:

Will this present a true picture of what is important to the members of the faith community itself?

How much potential does this have for promoting the spiritual growth of pupils regardless of their own faith (or non-faith) stance?

A working code

The school might think about adopting a policy statement such as the one below regarding the treatment of faith communities in religious education (RE.)

Regarding the way in which it represents faith communities, the school will:

- present accurate information about faith, both in its historical development and as is practised today
- convey how faith is understood from within
- focus on key beliefs, values and practices as identified by the faith community itself
- indicate the variety of ways in which individual believers may respond to the demands of their faith
- involve, as far as is practicable, practitioners of the faith to provide an authentic 'insider' view, while recognising that there may be a variety of 'insider' views
- endeavour to achieve clarity about how faiths differ from one another while also pointing to areas of common ground.

Implications for methodology

If the purpose of RE is to help pupil's advance in their personal search for meaning through reflection on shared human experience and the insights of the major faiths, they are unlikely to achieve this through a heavily content-laden curriculum.

Pupils are most likely to advance in self- understanding by meeting with members of faith communities, by questioning, by reflecting, by imagining, by doing, by expressing.

The methodologies most appropriate for RE will be ones which engage the pupil in a process of discovery. Of course, facts play their part in any programme of religious education, as in any other subject, but always the question needs to be asked: 'What will the pupil do with this fact'?

Questions for the RE classroom:

What can be learned about:

- Writings which are considered holy?
- Stories told about God or the gods?
- Buildings used for worship?
- Artefacts and the meanings they convey?
- Ceremonies and celebrations?
- community life?
- Faith being put into practice in daily life?

What can be learned by asking:

- What does this mean to a believer?
- How might this change a believer's life?
- What beliefs, concepts or values does this practice point to?
- How does this relate to my search for significance?



6.2 Applying the Principles of 'Excellence and Enjoyment' to the Barnsley Local Agreed Syllabus in Religious Education

Excellence and Enjoyment: The National Primary Strategy

Provides a framework for learning and teaching:

- Skills,
- Knowledge,
- Understanding.

Implications for the Barnsley Local Agreed Syllabus (LAS)

Teachers will apply the skills, knowledge and understanding of the religious education (RE) programme of study to enable pupils to show what they can do, know and understand about religions, and their learning from religion.

Who?

- Pupil focused
- Staff enabling
- Parental involvement
- Collaborative group learning
- Organisational learning
- Learning networks

RE teaching and learning will take these six principles into account, especially in building links with local religious communities, and making use of parental Involvement where possible.

What?

- Curriculum purpose - meeting the varied needs of all pupils' outcome focused - raising standards.
- Curriculum content - rich and wide-ranging - flexibility, freedom and fun!
- Curriculum outcome - assessment for learning - how do we know we are making a difference?

- Learning in RE will be matched carefully to pupils' needs and prior experience.
- Teachers will confidently handle religious materials so that pupils learn in engaging and enriched ways, including aspects of the joy of faith.
- Assessment in RE will have a light touch, and a strong emphasis on developing shared (pupils and teacher) understanding of progress and 'next steps'.

Creating a curriculum that:

- Motivation and challenges - encourages learning by discovery
- Embraces imagination and creativity
- Involves children in practical experiences
- Provides a range of worthwhile opportunities
- Makes the best use of all resources
- Addresses continuity and progression as a 'tool' for improving learning
- Celebrates pupils' contributions and experiences
- Reflects the values, ethos, nature and context of the school community
- Equips pupils for life and living (eg by providing many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)

- Teaching in RE will use the widest possible range of stimulus materials, including artefacts, visits, visitors, visual materials and thinking skills strategies to engage and inspire learners.
- Tasks set for pupils will include opportunities for their own creative use of artistic skills, poetry, language and expressive arts. This range of tasks will clearly draw their learning purposes from the heart of the curriculum for RE.
- Teaching in RE will use some common themes across Key Stages 1 and 2, but will plan progression using the level descriptors of the LAS. Pupils will be enabled to move from recognition, exploration and naming to description, connection, linking and explaining aspects of religion.
- RE will often centre upon the questions of pupils and their experiences and make links to the teachings and practices of the religions selected for study.
- Teaching will be explicitly sensitive to the religious (and non- religious) backgrounds of pupils in the class and seek to set the kind of environment in which learners share freely from their own experience and enter into dialogue for learning.



- Schools will be able to locate their approaches to RE in relation to their overall aims. Themes such as inclusion, experiential learning, challenge and standards will be applied to RE as to other subjects
- RE practice will lead the school with regard to spiritual development, and will link into other curriculum areas with regard to moral, social and cultural awareness among pupils and the development of positive and respectful attitudes to a plural society

Why?

- Children learn better when they are excited and engaged
- Appropriate challenges stimulate children to high standards (achievement and attainment)
- Children don't learn in 'boxes' - cross-curricular skills and application (eg literacy, numeracy and ICT)
- Develop independent learning - ownership

- Monitoring of RE provision will take particular note of the activities that motivate, engage and challenge. These will be enhanced each year
- The best skills of pupils in literacy, or other areas, will be harnessed in well-set RE activities, which give pupils a chance to show and extend their competence with regard to RE
- Links between RE and PSHE, the humanities, expressive arts and other curriculum areas will be developed and open
- Pupils will have many opportunities for good RE homework and other independent learning strategies

When?

- Now
- Need to plan for change - focus on learning and teaching
- Empowering (pupils and teachers)
- Supporting (pupils and teachers)
- Encouraging (pupils and teachers)

As the new LAS is planned and then delivered in each school, the linking to current strategies can be made simply and clearly. A 'tandem' approach to developing RE with current strategies is recommended. Some schools may wish to use their subject-development in RE to trial aspects of the primary curriculum

Where?

- Everywhere - whole school environment
- Making the best of the inside and the outside - learning space, display, resources, placing of computers, whiteboards, etc
- Making links with the community

RE will not be the only focus for the development of challenging and creative whole school environments but does play a part. Through ICT, artefacts, creative and artistic activities, in school worship/assembly, and with music, dance, drama and literacy. RE can lead or participate in establishing a high-quality environment for learning

How?

- Whole school approach
- Subject contribution
- Cross curricular approaches and considerations - especially literacy, numeracy and ICT
- Values development - 'whole person' development - academic and personal (values - spiritual, moral, social and cultural development - OFSTED link to 'standards')

It is chiefly in regard to values development that RE plays a key role here. Teachers can use stories of faith, codes for behaviour and numerous active learning and 'consequences' approaches to learning in RE that will impact upon the sense pupils have that valuing relationships, learning, each other, diversity and the environment in school and beyond

**Subject contribution**

- Identify specific skills and attitudes subject areas develop - study and personal
- Build creativity, variety and rigour into all subject areas
- Encourage pupils to see the wider picture - cross-curricular links

Skills and attitudes:

- Empathy
- Respect for all
- Interpretation in making sense Creativity:
- Expressive arts and literacy activities in RE encourage imagination, speculation and open mindedness

Focus on RE**We need:**

- A well planned curriculum, based on the LAS, focusing on the learning needs of all pupils
- A range of approaches and strategies - active and engaging
- Creative and enjoyable
- To consider different and varied learning styles and preferences
- To encourage learning by discovery and experience
- A thought-out 'assessment for learning' strategy- knowledge of children informs them how they are taught and the way they learn
- To establish / maintain rigour in our thinking, planning and delivery' of RE
- To enjoy our excellent RE (pupils and staff)

The schemes of work schools develop from LAS should ask the questions in every unit: What is creative here? What is enjoyable? What is challenging?

RE benefits in the classroom from activities designed to appeal to the visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learner. Elements of the 'multiple intelligences' can all be built into RE: what is there for the learner whose abilities are firstly linguistic, logical, visual, spatial, bodily, musical, interpersonal or intrapersonal?

RE assessment needs to be lightweight and efficient, and to inform teaching and learning. Comparison is not the purpose of assessment in RE: helping children learn is at the heart. This involves using the levels for clarity in task setting and in the teachers' planning. It involves careful questioning to see what children can do, and well-planned 'next steps'.

RE is a challenging subject area to teach. Continuing improvement is achievable if staff are able to energise their practice. It is the intention of SACRE to enable this through the LAS, and beyond.



6.3 The Role of the Teacher in Religious Education

The principal concern of any teacher is the education of the whole child through the provision of appropriate learning experiences. There is also a natural involvement in the pastoral care of pupils, which may from time to time involve awareness of the spiritual domain. Teaching religious education (RE) requires nothing from the teacher by way of personal commitment to a religious understanding of life. It does require the acceptance that such a view is a valid one that is, and has been, held by many people and that its study is a significant part of the whole curriculum. This acceptance is a commitment to an educational view of the subject. RE is not concerned with the nurture of a particular faith or the acceptance of a particular way of life. Nurturing faith is the responsibility of the home and the church, gurdwara, mosque, synagogue, mandir or temple. The school is concerned with education.

RE will quite properly encourage an interest in religion, and in particular faiths among pupils, just as other curriculum subjects such as music, PE or mathematics may be influential on some pupils. However, it is not the aim of RE to produce or encourage any particular beliefs, religious or secular, among pupils.

This must not be the intention of a teacher in a school where this Local Agreed Syllabus (LAS) applies. This does not mean that a teacher cannot share religious insights or enthusiasm with pupils as he / she might share artistic or musical ones. Professional care needs to be taken that such enthusiasms do not step over the borders between education and into such activities as evangelisation or proselytising.

This understanding of RE should commend the subject to all teachers whatever their personal position.

Commitment to a particular religious or secular standpoint is not a barrier to involvement in RE. Indeed, the personal positions of both teacher and pupils legitimately form a significant part of the approach to RE that underlies this LAS.

Dealing with pupils' questions and disclosures - The nature of RE, particularly the second attainment target, learning from religion and responding to human experience, may lead to pupils asking difficult questions or even making personal disclosures. Understandably, teachers can find such situations difficult to handle; it seems easy to say the wrong thing. This leads to a

temptation to focus on the first attainment target, learning about religion, avoiding potentially difficult situations. However, this denies pupils access to those aspects of RE that are the most educationally rewarding.

Examples of difficult situations include pupils:

- asking questions to which the different religions have no agreed answer, eg 'Was Jesus the Son of God?'
- asking questions that raise difficult philosophical or theological issues, eg 'Why does a supposedly good God allow suffering?' (or more concrete and personal versions of this question)
- asking what the teacher believes, eg 'Do you believe in God?'
- making comments or asking questions that reflect an offensive or unreflective approach to religion, e.g. 'Are you one of the God squad?'
- making disclosures that reveal personal faith commitments. e.g. 'I believe that the Qur'an is the absolute word of Allāh (pbuh)'
- making disclosures that are personal, e.g. 'My grandma died yesterday'
- making inappropriate value judgements on the faith of other people, e.g. 'People who believe that 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 seems 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 'off-the-shelf' ways of dealing with such classroom incidents. Teachers will need to use their professional judgement and sensitivity.

The ethos of the school, and the contribution of RE to it, will be important in establishing the right climate for dealing with such questions and incidents. The following practical guidelines may be of help.

Practical guidelines

- Encourage the use of 'owning and grounding' language such as 'in my opinion' or 'some Hindus would say'. This allows belief statements to be made in the classroom without everyone feeling they have to agree.
- Treat the question or incident as a positive rather than negative event, wherever possible. Remember that it is the way the incident is dealt with and how the class response is managed that matters most.
- Affirm the importance of the pupils' contribution, even if you don't agree with it, with phrases like 'I've often wondered about that too, that is an excellent question', 'You're not the only one who doesn't know the answer to that.'
- Help pupils to understand that diversity of opinion and the existence of unanswerable questions are aspects of life that we all must learn to live with and may welcome. Education, age or intelligence will not eliminate all these aspects.
- Allow for the possibility of a range of answers or opinions. For example, use 'most Christians would probably say..., but some Muslims would think differently, saying...' Encourage an awareness of diversity without undermining the pupil's own beliefs.
- Use the situation to open up rather than close down conversation or thinking. Encourage a 'let's explore this together' approach in which the teacher is a participant, not simply an expert.
- Encourage further exploration by suggesting to other people that pupils could ask, e.g. faith community leaders, or places where they might find help, e.g. the resource centre or library. 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. But always respect 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 rather than abstract discussion of any concepts involved. With some pupils it may be possible to suggest a follow-up to the pupil's disclosure (eg with a personal tutor), but without 'fobbing off' the importance of it. If this is not possible, set the class an activity that provides time to attend to the pupil or allows the pupil some personal space.
- Throw questions back for further clarification with phrases like 'What do you think?', 'Can you clarify...?', 'What would happen if...?'. Aim to keep the pupil pondering, rather than giving closed answers that seem clear-cut when the issue is anything but clear cut.
- Be as honest as possible without being ruthless. For example, it does not help to tell a pupil that her granddad has gone to heaven if the teacher does not believe that, or if it would be offensive to the pupil. But a teacher could tell the pupil that many religious people believe that. In these circumstances a teacher should not normally challenge a pupil's belief. Keeping one's integrity with sensitivity is important.
- Let a discussion develop if it is being taken seriously by the class. But have a quiet or reflective technique ready to provide a suitable close to the

discussion, e.g. a chance for the pupils to make a private diary entry or to make a personal resolution based on the lesson.

- Never intrude into a pupil's personal life. There should always be the freedom to remain silent in lessons where the discussion is intimate or deep. Teaching the whole class rather than small groups may reduce the risk of particular pupils being exposed to such intrusions.
- Establish ground rules with the class for discussing controversial issues.
- If a difficult issue arises, which is impossible to handle properly, return to it later when it can be dealt with in a more considered way.

It is of course important that teachers are willing to say, 'I don't know', perhaps more often in RE than in other subjects, since RE is centrally concerned with truth seeking in uncertain fields. But regarding matters of religious practice and description, the standard of accuracy for RE is clearly 100%.

The ways in which religions are presented vary: our media often use crude stereotypes to speak about religion, and some of these are negative. In the classroom, religions should be presented carefully, with integrity, in ways that reflect the authentic experience and understanding of believers today. Teachers may find it helpful to consider:

- Using the language of many, most, some or one, rather than 'all'. There are very few true sentences that begin 'all Christians' or 'all Hindus'.
- Using 'distancing' and 'grounding' in the ways that religion is described (e.g. If a six year old pupil asks, 'Is Jesus our God?' the teacher might reply 'Christians believe that Jesus is God come down to earth. Who do you know who is a Christian?').
- Reflecting in their teaching the internal diversity of each religion, for example fundamentalists and conservatives, liberals and radicals are to be found in many religions.
- Using 'insiders' perspectives for teaching wherever possible, e.g. through visits, visitors, resources and artefacts that come from inside a religion.
- Encouraging pupils to consider religion in its local and contemporary manifestations (here and now, rather than just far away and long ago).
- Teaching beliefs, values, practices and specialist terminology as identified by religious communities, presenting the faith as insiders see it (without ignoring the possibility of informed critical responses).

The Glossary in this syllabus builds upon the QCA Glossary of Terms, as well as using many other sources.



6.4 Teachers with Other Specialisms in Religious Education ('TWOS')

This guidance paper seeks to offer religious education subject leaders some ideas about how to develop high standards among the teaching team for the subject, in both primary and secondary settings.

Most teachers in primary schools who take religious education (RE) lessons are not specialists. Some primary schools' approach RE as a whole staff, but no teacher has a specialism in the subject. In many RE departments in secondary schools, the long-term national shortage of specialist RE teachers can be seen in the many teachers with other specialisms (TWOS) who take several lessons of RE. The evidence of Ofsted is that RE is more taught by TWOS than any other curriculum subject, with the exceptions of ICT and Citizenship (which as new subjects had no specialist teachers until relatively recently). It is common to find RE staffed even in larger secondary schools by a single specialist head of department and six, eight, ten or more other colleagues who have space on their timetable to fit in some RE classes. The huge growth of the GCSE short course RE courses in recent years has led to an increase in the use of TWOS.

Inspection evidence

Given that the recruitment of enough well qualified RE specialists to cope with the expanding teaching, status and quality of the subject is a long-term goal, the short-term reality is that many thousands of pupils are taught RE by a geographer, historian or PE specialist. Ofsted's findings about this are:

'Although most secondary schools have at least one RE specialist, most use some non-specialist teachers. While non-specialists can, with training and experience, become good RE teachers, inspectors frequently comment on the detrimental effect of using different staff each year to fill in' their timetables with RE lessons. It is important that non-specialists receive training, and that there is continuity in their deployment.' (HMSO, 1998, 161)

There are, of course, many excellent and expert teachers of RE, both primary and secondary, who began their careers in other subject specialisms, but by experience, professional development and further

study has become 'specialists' themselves.

TWOS rather than 'non specialists'

All teachers are specialists in their own subjects, and being a drama, English, science or technology teacher might enable someone to bring particular skills, strengths or capabilities to teaching RE.

It may be a common danger that the subject leader for RE looks at the timetable for the coming year, notes the fact that several people with other specialisms have been given RE lessons to teach, and thinks immediately 'what can I get out of them?' It is crucial to build effective teams that the question of what the TWOS can get out of teaching RE should also be considered, because commitment and satisfaction in the work are two of the foundations of success. Many TWOS in RE are creative and imaginative teachers in their specialist discipline, but in RE they admit to using only a more constrained range of 'safety first' teaching strategies because they are nervous or have no time to branch out.

What do TWOS like about doing Religious Education? What do they need?

Questionnaire research by the Professional Council for RE discovered useful perspectives on the issues of teaching RE beyond one's own specialism. It is interesting that every respondent can identify what they like about teaching RE and taken together these 'likes' suggest a rich and vigorous engagement with the subject by these 'non-specialists'. They include, for example, variety, challenge, the questioning approach of RE, life issues, the space for personal consideration, the relation of the subject to pupils' own experience, to good citizenship and the opportunity to broaden their own knowledge. They report that RE can be unexpectedly rewarding.

Significantly, the most common response here has to do with the opportunities teachers find to continue developing their own values, beliefs and attitudes: it seems that where TWOS like RE they like it for the same reason as many pupils, that it provides opportunities to explore personal meaning and spirituality.

The confidence with which TWOS approach religious artefacts, assessment. Or the handling of sensitive issues is important. It also applies to the setting of realistic but challenging targets. Teachers who are very familiar with national curriculum standards in their own subject find it hard to get a handle on what constitutes an appropriate response from pupils in RE.

Directions for TWOS in Religious Education

There seem to be four areas in which RE subject leaders might consider developing their strategy for working with TWOS. Given that TWOS will continue to teach RE in large numbers, how can all who teach RE be best enabled to secure quality in RE? Perhaps with reference to staff development, staff support, senior management action and monitoring, here are some of the initial hypotheses of the TWOS project in each of these areas, which we hope will enable teachers to develop their own strategy in a focused way,

1. Staff development strategies

- Awareness raising. Many who tackle a single class or a couple of RE lessons a week have no opportunity to think about what this part of their professional life requires. A starting point might be a staff RE team meeting once a term, and the first meeting might raise awareness.
- Skills and needs analysis. Research questionnaire approaches have given teachers a chance to say what they can do well, and what they need to be more effective. Many similar approaches could address this area. One key is in making links between RE and other subjects, the humanities, the expressive arts and so on.
- Finding and adopting rationale for RE. The need for a proper professional justification for RE teaching has been very often addressed by RE professionals, but not always by TWOS. There are many resources to help teachers to find a rationale, including some of the features developed in this syllabus.
- Developing a framework of understanding about religions in which to develop subject knowledge. This is particularly important in building confidence



and dealing with 'commitment issues'.

- Accessing information and factual material to develop subject knowledge. From the huge Information pool, TWOS need to know where to begin, where to turn, and where to find help.
- Application of a full range of teaching and learning skills to the RE curriculum. Safety first leads to weak RE. TWOS need to be supported in active learning, linking their best methodological and pedagogical skills from their specialism to what happens in RE.
- Monitoring and mentoring. The value of supportive and positive observation, sharing of practice and learning activities, as well as more formal monitoring, is clear. Why shouldn't schools provide time for collaboration and observation here?
- Teamwork is impossible without meetings, training opportunities and chances for professional development.
- Time for meetings, collaboration, preparation and review is a reasonable request from the RE subject leader wherever TWOS are used.

2. Staff support strategies: teaching and learning in the classroom

- Resource based learning, in which pupils rely less on the

knowledge of their teacher, more on a bank of varied resources where information and ideas can be easily found.

- Active learning, in which the pupils' own insights, ideas, experience and knowledge are the basis for RE work, rather than seeing the teacher as a fount of knowledge.
- Team teaching, so that mutual observation and support can be structured in low key and non-threatening ways.
- Using ICT, for example on a school intranet between classrooms, or to provide ready access to information and understandings in the TWOS RE classroom.
- A subject based culture of openness, encouragement and high expectations.

3. Essential management support for TWOS in religious education

- Continuity of deployment. It is bad practice to assign different TWOS to RE year after year. No school should be content with such unreasonable demands upon staff.
- Professional development. It would be reasonable to expect that all TWOS taking on some RE will be offered some professional development opportunities.
- Time for the team. Staff meetings which TWOS cannot

attend, because of main subject commitments are an inadequate response to the needs of RE team building.

- Support for the subject leader. Time, professional development and financial resources will enable subject leaders to manage their teams of TWOS better.

4. Monitoring

- Reciprocal classroom observation between TWOS and RE subject specialists is a reasonable first step.
- Informal support and guidance is a lifeline to those 'thrown in at the deep end' of RE

Management Issues

There are some common problems faced by TWOS in RE, some management strategies which enable effective RE from mixed teams and some support strategies which help teams to form and function effectively. In some ways, these strategies are quite simple and obvious, but they are not widely in place. If the situation of RE being taught by TWOS to very large numbers of pupils is to continue, then it seems both reasonable and essential for school managers, subject leaders and TWOS to plan for continuity of deployment and appropriate support structures, including particularly Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities and team time.



6.5 Management and Monitoring of Religious Education

The Role of the Subject Leader Religious Education (RE) is taught by many teachers, and most schools recognise that the appointment of a subject leader is basic to good practice. The Agreed Syllabus Conference takes this view: in primary and secondary schools alike, quality in RE is dependent upon the quality of subject leadership. This is an issue for governors and school managers.

This brief section does not give complete guidance to the subject leader about their role. Teachers should consult the Teacher Training Agency's 'Standards for Subject Leaders' and the joint publication by PCfRE, AREAIC and CULRE 'Standards for Subject Leaders in Religious Education'.

Policy

It is good practice for schools to appoint a subject leader for RE, and to agree a policy for RE. Many schools have a link governor for RE. Many schools may wish to review their policy as they Implement this Local Agreed Syllabus (LAS). We have included a sample policy for RE in a primary school in the guidance and support materials for LAS. The syllabus is broad and flexible, so school policy should state clearly how the staff and governors wish to implement their RE curriculum in their own context.

Monitoring

In the primary school, the RE subject leader can support and guide colleagues through an active monitoring role. It is appropriate for RE subject leaders to ask:

- Is there a planned programme of RE for each class, in accordance with the syllabus?
- Is the curriculum time for RE at or above the minimum time endorsed by the syllabus (this can be taken 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 attainment targets? (AT1: Learning about religion, AT2: Learning from religion).
- Do teachers have clear objectives and set high expectations in RE (this will be informed by the eight-level scale in the LAS)?
- Are high 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?
- Are teaching and learning in RE suitably paced?
- Is there a suitable proportion of direct teaching in RE, with resources used effectively to model methods?
- Does the whole class work, discussion and questioning enable all pupils to make progress and take part?
- In what ways does teaching provide opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils?
- Are opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development identified and developed for all the pupils?
- Is group work well organised for learning in RE?
- 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?

Observation of Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

Teachers find observation of RE teaching both challenging and reassuring. Subject leaders may wish to take a lead in being observed: this is good practice. Professional approaches to RE will make space for all teachers to be observed, and to benefit from teamwork. A key purpose of this monitoring is to build confidence among staff in setting good standards in RE.

A programme of observation is often most effective if it runs alongside opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD), and if the focus is clear, on for example a particular religion, or on learning from religion, or on skills of reflection. In observing RE teaching, subject leaders may find the observation sheet gives focus to their monitoring and to staff development issues.



RE Monitoring: Discussion Sheet

Issue or question being addressed:	Observer's Commentary
What were the aims of the RE lesson?	
How were the aims shared with the pupils?	
What was expected of the pupils? Were expectations challenging? Were they appropriately focused on RE objectives?	
What was the structure of the lesson, and the learning tasks set by the teacher? Did the tasks enable learning about and from religions?	
What resources were available? Did teaching make good use of resources for religious learning?	
In what ways did the teaching provide opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils?	
What was the balance between direct teaching and the tasks pupils worked on?	
What religious concepts and vocabulary were being taught and / or reinforced?	
In what ways did questioning develop pupils' religious understanding? How did pupils respond, especially to open questioning?	
What strategies were used to match work to pupils' needs (group work, differentiated resources or progressively graded tasks, individual work)?	
Did children have opportunities to respond for themselves, reflect on Ideas and questions, relate religion to their own experience, learn from religion? Was this effective?	
How did the lesson conclude? Was learning made explicit by pupils themselves? Could they say what they had learned?	
Was the deployment of any support staff effective?	



6.6 Sample Religious Education Policy for a Primary School

This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the religious education (RE) subject leader and teaching staff. It was approved by Governors on _____ and will be reviewed on _____

The Aims of Religious Education at _____ School

RE at _____ School will be provided in line with the legal requirements. These are the following:

- "All schools must provide religious education and daily acts of collective worship as set out in the legislation for Local Authority-maintained schools and funding agreements for academies and free schools." ('RE and collective worship in academies and free schools.' 18 December 2012).
- The basic curriculum will include provision for religious education for all pupils on the school roll.
- The content of RE shall reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain.
- The RE which is provided shall be in accordance with the Barnsley Local Agreed Syllabus (LAS) 2020.

Within the framework of the law and the Agreed Syllabus, our aims in RE are:

- To enable each child to explore our shared human experience and the questions of meaning and purpose which arise from our experiences
- To enable pupils to know about and understand the beliefs and practices of some of the great religions of the world, particularly those represented in Barnsley and Great Britain. Among these religions, Christianity has a particular place and is taught each year of the primary phase.
- To promote respect, sensitivity and cultural awareness by teaching about the religions represented in the region and the country.
- To affirm each child in his/her own family tradition, religious or secular.

- To provide children with opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- To develop the ability of pupils to think about, and develop for themselves, beliefs and values by which they can live through studying concepts like celebration, the sacred, authority, religious belief and lifestyle, and through exploring the fundamental questions of life.

Context

The context of RE at _____ School is that of a small _____ /large/rural/urban primary school serving children in the age range _____. We work to the Barnsley LAS 2020.

We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome diversity, and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child. We are glad to have the active support of members of local faith communities in RE and in general.

We recognise the inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the leading role which the RE curriculum plays in some of these areas.

Time Allocation

The Barnsley SACRE recommends a minimum of 36 hours per year for RE at Key Stage 1, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage 2, a recommendation endorsed by the Barnsley LAS 2020. The time allocated at _____ School will be _____ hours per year at Key Stage 1 and _____ hours per year at Key Stage 2. RE curriculum time does not include assembly or collective worship, even where the assembly provides a starting point for curricular work.

Scheme of Work

A detailed scheme of work is available for teachers and other interested people alongside this policy. It has been written in the light of the LAS and also refers to current publications e.g. 'Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance' - DCSF 2010 (last updated 2018); 'Community cohesion in action' - QCDA 2010; 'Religion and Worldviews: the way forward' – CORE 2018. RE will be based

around termly themes in Reception and Key Stage One, where Christianity and _____ will be the major religions studied. At Key Stage Two pupils will learn about Christianity throughout the key stage, and will also have major learning opportunities with regard to two other religions, _____ in years 3 and 4, and _____ in years 5 and 6. Where a staff training need can be identified, funding through the school's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme can be obtained upon request to the Head Teacher.

Teaching and Learning Styles

Our policy seeks to use RE, art, drama, talking activities, visits, posters, photos, videos, display work and other active learning strategies. Cross-curricular work is encouraged, in line with whole school policy on teaching and learning.

Resources

RE resources are stored in each key stage base and should be returned after use in tidy order! Staff are invited to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending.

Visits to places of worship

We are able to visit two different Christian churches in the immediate vicinity of the school, where clergy or other members of the church community are willing to meet with children and be involved in RE. We shall aim to use this valuable resource for all classes. We also intend to enable children at Key Stage Two to visit a place of worship from one of the other major religious traditions while studying a unit on 'religion in the neighbourhood.'

Matching Work to Pupils' Needs

Whole school policy with regard to special needs and differentiation applies to RE: teachers should be alert to the fact that some children have a special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This of course may not relate to their genuine educational 'ability.'



Assessment

We report on pupils' progress and attainment in RE to parents, as required by law. The LAS (Section 4) provides examples of age-related expectations (KS 1 and 2) which form the foundation of judgments based on each pupil's end of year performance (Emerging, Secure or Mastered). We intend to make specific, individual, accurate comments on each child's progress in RE, based on regular monitoring of work and classroom observations. We will transfer this information to new schools when pupils leave us.

A folder of examples of pupils' work, which is designed to help teachers make judgments about attainment and progress is available. Staff are asked to add to it copies of pupils' work that provide clear evidence of achievement. This approach to exemplifying standards aims to clarify our understanding of what makes for quality in learning about religions and learning from religions.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy should be implemented for the next __ years, and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. To ensure that the policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, all staff are asked to return a summary sheet of RE work done to the coordinator each term. The coordinator's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice.

Withdrawal

We note the rights of parents to withdraw their children from RE and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We aim to provide an open curriculum, which can be taught to all pupils by all staff. Please refer to the coordinator or head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. Support on the issues of withdrawal is available from Barnsley SACRE.

RE Coordinator:

Link Governor:

Head Teacher:

Date:

(This sample policy is offered to help schools in developing their own policy for RE)