

# Religious Education in the Curriculum

**The principal aim of religious education in church schools is to affirm, encourage and challenge pupils on their spiritual journey.**

In Church schools religious education should:

- enable pupils to achieve knowledge and understanding of Christianity, especially as represented by the Church of England;
- enable pupils to achieve knowledge and understanding of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain;
- enable pupils to achieve knowledge and understanding of the influence of religions on people's lives and in society;
- enable pupils to reflect on and respond to faith in the light of their experience.

The aim is promoted through two attainment targets:

- **learning about religions**
- **learning from religion**

## **Attainment target 1: Learning about religions**

- knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and teachings;
- knowledge and understanding of religious practices and lifestyles;
- knowledge and understanding of ways of expressing meaning.

## **Attainment target 2: Learning from religion**

- skill of asking and responding to questions of identity and experience:
  - extending pupils' thinking and awareness of themselves, their place in relation to others, the needs and desires of others;
  - enabling pupils to articulate, develop and critique their own choices.
- skill of asking and responding to questions of meaning and purpose:
  - extending pupils' thinking and awareness to the wonder and complexity of the universe;
  - opening their eyes to the spiritual dimension of life;
  - shifting their perspective from the prevailing secular materialism to allow for a religious interpretation of life.
- skill of asking and responding to questions of values and commitments:
  - helping pupils to begin to see the point of recognising and ordering their own values and priorities;
  - developing pupils' confidence and competence in dealing with moral issues, choices and dilemmas;enable pupils to develop empathy, skills of moral reasoning and commitment to the highest principles and aspirations.

## Using level descriptions

The categories developed for the level descriptions follow those set out in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's non-statutory guidance for RE (QCA 2000).

<b>Attainment Target 1: learning about religions within a historical and contemporary setting having knowledge and understanding of:</b>	<b>Attainment Target 2: learning from religion - being able to respond, evaluate and develop the skills to apply questions raised universally about what it is to be a human being:</b>
<b>Beliefs and teachings - what people believe:</b>	<b>Identity and experience - making sense of who we are through:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>significant events and people,</i></li> <li>• <i>past and present,</i></li> <li>• <i>sources of religious authority</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>own experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>the experiences of others</i></li> <li>• <i>learning from and responding to various influences</i></li> </ul>
<b>Practices and lifestyles - what people do:</b>	<b>Meaning and purpose - making sense of life through:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>as a community and individually</i></li> <li>• <i>celebrating, fasting or worshipping</i></li> <li>• <i>applying their beliefs to the way they live</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>own experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>the experiences of others</i></li> <li>• <i>learning from and responding to various influences</i></li> </ul>
<b>Expression and language - how people express themselves:</b>	<b>Values and commitments – making sense of right and wrong through:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>about beliefs and religious teaching</i></li> <li>• <i>through words, writings and actions</i></li> <li>• <i>in appearance, the arts and buildings</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>own experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>the experiences of others</i></li> <li>• <i>learning from and responding to various influences</i></li> </ul>

The purposes of using the levels are:

- to improve planning and delivery by teachers and effective reception by pupils.
- to help the diagnosis of problems by teachers
- to share the objectives with the pupils as appropriate, so that they can understand what is being asked of them
- to ensure that tasks are matched to aims and objectives of the Syllabus for RE, and are designed to help pupils make progress towards these.

The levels can only be an effective tool for assessing pupil attainment if the assessment task is planned from lesson objectives, builds on pupils' learning and allows for achievement of the order expected of the age and ability range of pupils. When planning a topic, the focus should be clear from the beginning. There should be a specific religious education objective, with an expected outcome. Pupils should be made aware of what is expected of them and what they need to do to make progress. This should not be related to general effort or neatness of presentation, although this is important, but to the subject criteria. The focus should provide key questions which will help pupils to meet at least one of the level statements and help them to develop a particular religious education skill or attitude.

Every activity in every lesson should not be assessed in detail, or recorded against a level. About twice a year, however, a specific task should be set to assess pupils' progress within one or two strands in each of the attainment targets. Less formal assessment of a formative nature will be going

on all the time, for example through pupils' verbal questions and answers, peer or self-assessment strategies, class participation and teacher feedback.

The same topic will inevitably be covered on a number of occasions throughout the whole syllabus, but with a different focus. A different attainment target or strand would then be used to assess learning. All six strands of the two attainment targets cannot be assessed in every piece of work submitted.

Assigning a level is not an 'exact science'. A certain level of professional judgement will be involved, as well as some interpreting of the distinction between each level. Teachers need to understand what each level expects and should try to gain a good grasp of the key features of each one.

Teaching staff will best be able to refine their practice by putting together portfolios of work which have been jointly moderated by marking and levelling as a team and agreeing what constitutes the standard required to achieve a particular level. The two targets and their respective strands do not necessarily cover every aspect of the syllabus, but provide a suitable framework in which to find a focus for measuring the development of pupils' abilities in religious education.