

# Promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

RE provides opportunities for:

- **spiritual development**, through helping pupils to consider and respond to questions of meaning and purpose in life, and questions about the nature of values in human society;
- **moral development**, through helping pupils to consider and respond to areas of morality using their knowledge and understanding of religious and ethical teaching. This enables them to make reasoned and informed judgements on religious and moral issues;
- **social development**, through helping pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in a plural society;
- **cultural development**, through fostering pupils' awareness and understanding of a range of beliefs, practices and values in their own society and in the wider world. Pupils explore issues within and between faiths, developing their understanding of the cultural contexts within which they live.

# Promoting pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship

RE deals with religious and moral beliefs and values that underpin personal choices and behaviour (e.g. relationships), social policies and practices (e.g. crime and punishment), and concepts and patterns of health (e.g. use of drugs). RE looks at the voluntary and charitable activities that help to make up a healthy society and provide opportunities for the development of active citizenship and involvement in 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 (e.g. rights and responsibilities).

RE also contributes to pupils' understanding of Europe and the world. Religious and moral issues in RE are worldwide. 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.

## **Promoting key skills**

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

### **Communication**

In RE, pupils 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 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 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 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. Many faith communities use ICT on a worldwide basis.

### **Working with others**

RE provides opportunities for pupils 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 ideals, and facing bereavement.

# **Promoting other aspects of the curriculum**

## **Thinking skills**

Religious Education is a rigorous and intellectual 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. It promotes skills of research, selection, analysis, interpretation, reflection, empathy, evaluation, synthesis, application, expression and communication.

## **Financial responsibility**

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**

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**

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 / Development education**

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.

# Literacy in RE

Much learning in religious education is accomplished through the use of language so improved literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) will help students reach their potential. Those who are aware of meanings of words, sentences and texts will be able to think more logically or symbolically and express themselves more effectively.

Language is important in religious education in many ways:

- words are often specific to a religion and need to be understood in their context;
- beliefs are frequently expressed in words;
- texts and narratives are ways of conveying religious truths; students need to understand that believers interpret them in different ways;
- students need to use forms of language that are appropriate and that reflect and develop respect for others, their beliefs and values;
- students need to use language with increasing sensitivity in order to progress through the skills of the level descriptions;
- students need to realise that language has limitations in religious education and that analogy, metaphor and non-verbal symbols are used to point beyond these limitations.

# ICT for RE

The National Curriculum requires that:

1. Pupils should be given opportunities to develop and apply their ICT capability through the use of ICT tools to support their learning in all subjects.
2. Pupils should be given opportunities to support their work by being taught to:
  - (a) find things out from a variety of sources, selecting and synthesising the information to meet their needs and developing an ability to question its accuracy, bias and plausibility
  - (b) develop their ideas using ICT tools to amend and refine their work and enhance its quality and accuracy
  - (c) exchange and share information, both directly and through electronic media
  - (d) review, modify and evaluate their work, reflecting critically on its quality, as it progresses.

ICT opens up access to many new resources and ways of working in religious education but it is important to remember that, to be effective, **ICT should be used to support the RE learning objectives**. In addition, it should improve the quality, enjoyment and motivation of teaching and learning and contribute to pupils' understanding of ICT. As with any other aspect of teaching, the use of ICT in achieving the learning objectives should be evaluated.

There are many ways in which ICT supports the development of pupils' knowledge , understanding and skills in RE, including:

- asking and answering questions
- exploring decisions on religious, social or moral issues and their consequences
- assessing and evaluating sources
- understanding, analysing and evaluating interpretations and arguments
- organising and communicating information and ideas
- communicating with faith communities, organisations and experts.

A useful source of information on the use of ICT in RE is Becta (<http://www.becta.org.uk>)

Two very useful gateway sites for use in religious education are:

- The RE site (<http://www.theresite.org.uk>) and
- RE-XS (<http://www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk>)