

# Introduction

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The last guidelines for Religious Education in Church of England Primary Schools were produced in 1983; these are widely drawn on by diocesan schools, but with the changes in curriculum generally since the introduction of the National Curriculum RE has increasingly needed more specific guidance.

The Diocesan Board of Education accordingly commissioned a review of the Guidelines in March 1992. This was supplemented by further guidance in 2005.

## Legal position

This syllabus is intended for use in Church of England voluntary schools. It is not mandatory but is intended to be an authoritative resource for governors and schools drawing up their own RE policies and curriculum.

In **voluntary aided** (and special agreement) schools, RE and Collective Worship are the responsibility of the governors who must provide both in accordance with any provisions of the Trust Deeds. Many Trust Deeds are held in the Diocesan Registry. If not, they are likely to be in the parish somewhere! This syllabus, with its endorsement by the Bishop of Manchester, is a guide to the appropriate interpretation of those deeds within the diocese. For inspection purposes it will be seen in that light and will be a vital tool for denominational inspectors in assessing both curriculum coverage and standards of work being achieved in RE.

**Voluntary controlled** schools are required to teach RE according to the Agreed Syllabus (while providing worship according to the Trust Deed). The Diocesan Syllabus offers controlled schools supplementary material, of use where Agreed Syllabuses do not fill out the content schools have to teach.

## The Role of Governors

In Voluntary Aided schools governors have a crucial role in that they are responsible for the RE and worship provided for the pupils. Foundation Governors will have a particular interest in RE and will want to be involved in the process of drawing up a policy and curriculum for the school.

All involved will need to be able to consider how influential personal convictions and faith can be in a process of determining educational issues. A church school is part of the witness of the church in service to the community. This does not mean that the school can function as an extension of the church and simply offer instruction in the faith, nor act as an evangelistic agency for Christianity. However, this syllabus makes it clear that helping children to a sound understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity is an important part of the task of church schools.

The Governors also provide important links with the community, especially the Christian community. A key feature of the Syllabus is the rooting of learning in the lives of real people and governors are central here as the bridges into those lives.