

For primary PGCE tutors and trainees  
**Including pupils with  
SEN and/or disabilities  
in primary religious  
education**

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# 1 Including pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in primary religious education (RE) lessons

## Introduction

This booklet gives tutors and trainees information about subject-specific issues in the religious education curriculum for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. It offers a straightforward introduction to planning inclusive religious education lessons. There are also suggestions for further reading and support in section 7.

Each booklet in this series contains a self-audit table (section 3). This offers a range of ideas that you can use to check against your practice and the practice you observe. The organisation of information in this table is based on the most recent research evidence and the views of expert teachers.

Recent evidence (eg Davis and Florian, 2004) suggests that much of what has traditionally been seen as pedagogy for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities consists of the approaches used in ordinary teaching, extended or emphasised for particular individuals or groups of pupils. This applies even when teaching approaches may look very different, eg when teachers are working with pupils with complex needs.

Trials of these materials in 2007/08 suggested that grouping teaching approaches into themes helps new teachers and those who work with them to consider and discuss their practice. Therefore each self-audit table is grouped under eight themes:

- maintaining an inclusive learning environment
- multi-sensory approaches, including information and communication technology (ICT)
- working with additional adults
- managing peer relationships
- adult-pupil communication
- formative assessment/assessment for learning
- motivation, and
- memory/consolidation.

There are many overlaps between these themes, but the model offers a useful starting point to help you develop teaching approaches that include pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

## Religious education

"Religious education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views that offer answers to these challenging questions. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

"RE encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions, while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

"RE encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society and global community. RE has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice."

National Curriculum, QCA, 2009

"In particular, RE offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:

- develop their self-confidence and awareness
- understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups
- bring their own experiences and understanding of life into the classroom
- develop positive attitudes towards others, respecting their beliefs and experience
- reflect on and consider their own values and those of others, and
- deal with issues that form the basis for personal choices and behaviour.

"In response to these opportunities, pupils can make progress in RE:

- by moving from a personal to a wider perspective
- by increasing their knowledge of religious beliefs, practices and experiences
- through developing understanding of the meaning of stories, symbols, events and pictures
- through developing and communicating their individual responses to a range of views."

QCA, 2009, Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties: Religious education

There are two main strands to religious education:

- **Learning about religion** – in which pupils begin their knowledge and understanding by becoming aware that some objects and people are in some way special. Pupils may be given experiences of different religions in their own community and the wider world. This might involve pupils engaging with people who practise different religions – through personal contact, visits, pictures or stories – and learning about items that have special meaning for believers – eg certain foods, clothing, artefacts used in religious practices.
- **Learning from religion** – Pupils should be given opportunities to express their own ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.

Learning RE involves two types of concept:

- general concepts linked to human experiences – such as celebration, sadness, goodness and forgiveness
- more specific concepts, some of which are found in all major faiths – such as prayer, worship and symbol – and others which are specific to individual faiths.

Emphasise aspects that help pupils to become aware of other people and their needs, build relationships, and look at the world about them. These elements can lead to awareness of, and possibly an understanding of, spiritual and moral values and concepts, such as justice and friendship. Inclusive ways of teaching concepts are discussed in section 3.

## Roles and responsibilities

Recent legislation and guidance make clear that **all** the teaching staff in a school are responsible for the provision for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. All staff should be involved in developing school policies and fully aware of the school's procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Staff should help pupils with SEN to overcome any barriers to participating and learning, and make any reasonable adjustments needed to include disabled pupils in all aspects of school life.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) has substantial implications for everyone involved in planning and teaching the curriculum. Schools have specific duties under the DDA to:

- make reasonable adjustments to their policies and practice to prevent discrimination against disabled pupils
- increase access for disabled pupils, including access to the curriculum, through accessibility planning, and
- promote disability equality and have a disability equality scheme showing how they will do so.

These duties are important and significant. They require schools to:

- take a proactive, systematic and comprehensive approach to promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination, and
- build disability equality considerations in from the start at every level of activity, including developing and delivering the curriculum and classroom practice.

Schools must address their various DDA duties together in a way that brings greater benefits to disabled pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school. Using the self-audit table in this booklet to develop an inclusive approach to your teaching will help you carry out these duties in your subject.

## Modifying the curriculum and the National Strategies to match pupils' needs

Teachers have a statutory duty to modify the programmes of study (or National Strategy materials).

**"Schools have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils."**

National Curriculum, QCA, 2008

This is more than just giving pupils 'access to the curriculum'. The curriculum is not immovable, like some building, to which pupils with SEN and/or disabilities have to gain access. It is there to be changed, where necessary, to include all pupils.

The statutory 'inclusion statement' in the National Curriculum sets out a framework for modifying the curriculum to include all pupils. Teachers have to:

- set suitable learning challenges
- respond to pupils' diverse learning needs, and
- overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for particular individuals and groups of pupils.

These principles allow you to:

- choose objectives for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities that are different from those of the rest of the group, or
- modify the curriculum to remove barriers so all pupils meet the same objectives.

Planning for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities should be part of the planning that you do for all pupils, rather than a separate activity. It doesn't need to be complicated or time-consuming. You can simply jot down brief notes in your lesson plans on the learning objectives and approaches you will use to remove barriers for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities. Any personal targets the pupil has can inform this planning. At times it may be appropriate to plan smaller steps to achieve the learning goal or provide additional resources. It is often possible to use the support available to do this, either from the SENCO or teaching assistant/mentor.

You should also think about the questions you will ask different groups and individuals and the ways you will check that pupils understand. Some pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will show they understand in different ways from their peers, so you should look at a range of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate what they know and can do.

## 2 Removing barriers to the primary religious education curriculum for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities

### Teaching and learning

To make religious education lessons inclusive, teachers need to anticipate what barriers to taking part and learning particular activities, lessons or a series of lessons may pose for pupils with particular SEN and/or disabilities. So in your planning you need to consider ways of minimising or reducing those barriers so that all pupils can fully take part and learn.

In some activities, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will be able to take part in the same way as their peers. In others, some modifications or adjustments will need to be made to include everyone.

For some activities, you may need to provide a 'parallel' activity for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, so that they can work towards the same lesson objectives as their peers, but in a different way.

Occasionally, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will have to work on different activities, or towards different objectives, from their peers.

There are some examples in the checklist in section 3.

### Assessment

When assessing pupils, you need to plan carefully to give pupils with SEN and/or disabilities every opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do, using alternative means where necessary.

### 3 Self-audit for inclusive religious education lessons: planning teaching, learning and support

You can use the following checklist to audit your practice and plan for more inclusive lessons.

The left-hand column of the table suggests approaches that are appropriate for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in all subjects. The right-hand column suggests extensions and emphases that may be helpful in removing barriers for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in religious education.

In most cases, the actions recommended are good practice for all pupils, regardless of their particular SEN and/or disability.

In other cases, the actions taken will depend on the barriers to taking part and learning identified in relation to the lesson being taught and pupils' particular SEN and/or disabilities. For example, the challenges of including pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder in considering the views of others may be quite different from those for including pupils with other SEN and/or disabilities.

Some children with identified needs – such as behaviour difficulties – may benefit from changes in activities or working with selected others or rest breaks. In these cases it is helpful to discuss and plan with a support assistant who knows the child well. The SENCO, subject associations and/or organisations supporting people with particular SEN/disabilities may be able to offer more specialist advice.

These examples are not comprehensive or exhaustive. They are intended to stimulate thinking rather than offer detailed advice on how to teach the subject to pupils with different types of special educational needs and/or disabilities. You will wish to add your own general or subject-specific ideas to the self-audit table.



## Maintaining an inclusive learning environment

Maintaining an inclusive learning environment	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Sound and light issues</b> For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>background noise and reverberation are reduced</li> <li>sound field system is used, if appropriate</li> <li>glare is reduced</li> <li>there is enough light for written work</li> <li>teacher's face can be seen – avoid standing in front of light sources, eg windows</li> <li>pupils use hearing and low vision aids, where necessary, and</li> <li>video presentations have subtitles for deaf or hearing-impaired pupils and those with communication difficulties, where required.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sound and light issues</b> Interactive whiteboards are non-reflective to reduce glare.</p>		
<p><b>Seating</b> Pupils' seating and the main board position are planned for the shape of the room.</p> <p>Pupils can see and hear clearly, as necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the teacher</li> <li>each other, and</li> <li>the board/TV/screens.</li> </ul> <p>Seating allows for peer or adult support.</p> <p>There is room for pupils with mobility difficulties to obtain their own resources, equipment and materials.</p> <p>Furniture is suitable. Consider the choice of chairs and desks, eg adjustable height tables, raised boards.</p>	<p><b>Seating</b> Seating should allow all pupils in the class to communicate, respond and interact with each other and the teacher in discussions.</p> <p>Avoid the need for copying lots of information. For example, notes on interactive whiteboards can be printed off for all pupils.</p>		

Maintaining an inclusive learning environment	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Resources</b> Storage systems are predictable.</p> <p>Resources are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessible, eg within reach, and</li> <li>• labelled clearly to encourage independent use, eg using images, colour coding, large print, symbols, Braille, as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resources</b></p>		
<p><b>Displays</b> Displays are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessible, within reach, visual, tactile</li> <li>• informative, and</li> <li>• engaging.</li> </ul> <p>Be aware of potentially distracting elements of wall displays.</p>	<p><b>Displays</b></p>		
<p><b>Low-arousal areas</b> A low-arousal area is planned for pupils who may need it and is available for use by all pupils. The area only needs to have immediately relevant materials/resources to minimise distraction.</p>	<p><b>Low-arousal areas</b></p>		
<p><b>Health and safety</b> Health and safety issues have been considered, eg trailing leads secured, steps and table edges marked.</p> <p>There is room for pupils with mobility difficulties to leave the site of an accident.</p> <p>Remember that pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) may have low awareness of danger.</p>	<p><b>Health and safety</b></p>		
<p><b>Unfamiliar learning environments</b> Pupils are prepared adequately for visits.</p>	<p><b>Unfamiliar learning environments</b> Make sure pupils are well prepared for visits, particularly to different places of worship. Preparation can include using photographs, videos, artefacts etc, so that pupils are not worried about unfamiliar situations.</p>		

## Multi-sensory approaches, including ICT

Multi-sensory approaches, including ICT	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Multi-sensory approaches</b> Pupils' preferred learning styles are identified and built on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when teaching – eg visual, tactile, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches are used, such as supporting teacher talk with visual aids; using subtitled or audio-described film/video</li> <li>• for recording – alternatives to written recording are offered, eg drawing, scribing, word processing, mind maps, digital images, video, voice recording, and</li> <li>• to promote security and aid organisation – eg visual timetables are used to show plans for the day or lesson; visual prompts for routines, such as how to ask for help; shared signals are developed so that pupils can convey their understanding, uncertainty or need for help.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Multi-sensory approaches</b> The acceptance that others have different views and that they have a right to hold and express them can present barriers for younger pupils and those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) or an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).</p> <p>Many of these barriers can be removed by using multi-sensory approaches, eg through drama and role-play, visits to places of worship, or sharing special meals.</p> <p>Learning about religion can present barriers for pupils with complex needs because of the abstract concepts involved.</p> <p>For example, some pupils will have difficulty understanding abstract concepts such as spirituality, belief, opinion, friendship, justice, cooperation, conflict and empathy. Drama, role-play, games and simulations, can develop understanding of such concepts.</p> <p>Use of good-quality artefacts allows pupils to understand aspects of the different faiths. Artefacts can be used to develop pupils' observation skills and use of language.</p> <p>Pupil-made videos or digital camera presentations of situations involving moral dilemmas can be powerful aids to learning, particularly for pupils for whom writing presents barriers.</p>		

Multi-sensory approaches, including ICT	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>ICT</b></p> <p>ICT is used to support teaching and learning.</p> <p>Accessibility features are used to include pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, as appropriate, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keyboard shortcuts instead of a mouse</li> <li>• sticky keys</li> <li>• a foot-controlled mouse, a head-controlled mouse or a wireless mouse</li> <li>• screen filters to cut down glare</li> <li>• increased font sizes for screen extension – in any case, fonts used in printed material should not be smaller than 12 pt (24 pt for screen presentations)</li> <li>• clear font type (normally sans serif, such as Arial or Comic Sans)</li> <li>• appropriate contrast between background and text, and/or</li> <li>• a talking word processor to read out text.</li> </ul> <p>Pupils with poor motor control may gain confidence and achieve success through writing/drawing on the computer.</p> <p>Predictive text can encourage pupils to use a more extensive vocabulary and attempt 'difficult' spellings. It can be enhanced by using subject-specific dictionaries.</p>	<p><b>ICT</b></p> <p>Digital image technologies, both still and moving, are valuable tools for teaching RE. Pupils can use image technology to support the writing process – eg creating a storyboard of pictures as a scaffold for writing a narrative about a moral choice.</p> <p>ICT can offer alternatives to writing as a way of responding to text – eg creating an electronic presentation with images, as a response to text.</p>		

## Working with additional adults

Working with additional adults	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Consulting pupils</b> Wherever possible, pupils are consulted about the kind and level of support they require.</p>	<p><b>Consulting pupils</b></p>		
<p><b>Planning support</b> Support from additional adults is planned to scaffold pupils' learning, allowing them, increasingly, to work independently. Planning should identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• which individuals/groups will receive support</li> <li>• where in the lesson pupils will need support</li> <li>• the type of support pupils should receive, and</li> <li>• when pupils should be allowed to work independently.</li> </ul> <p>Additional adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are clear about the lesson objectives</li> <li>• know the sequence of the lesson</li> <li>• understand the lesson content</li> <li>• know how to break tasks into more manageable chunks</li> <li>• are provided with key questions to encourage formative assessment, and</li> <li>• where appropriate, are familiar with any ICT used to support pupils.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Planning support</b> Support might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pre-tutoring important RE vocabulary, concepts and/or processes, where appropriate, and</li> <li>• preparing grids for recording information, which can be helpful for some pupils.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Evaluation</b> Additional adults report to the teacher on pupils' progress. The effectiveness of support is monitored and reviewed.</p>	<p><b>Evaluation</b></p>		

## Managing peer relationships

Managing peer relationships	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Grouping pupils</b> All forms of pupil grouping include pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.</p> <p>Manageable mixed-ability grouping or pairing is the norm, except when carefully planned for a particular purpose.</p> <p>Sequence of groupings is outlined for pupils.</p> <p>The transition from whole-class to group or independent work, and back, is clearly signalled. This is particularly helpful for pupils on the autistic spectrum.</p>	<p><b>Grouping pupils</b></p>		
<p><b>Managing group work and discussion</b> Pupils move carefully from paired discussion to group discussion – the language necessary for whole-class discussion work may be a barrier for pupils who find it difficult to express themselves in public. Paired and small group discussions provide opportunities for all to take part.</p> <p>Pupils are assigned specific roles (eg chair, writer, reporter, observer) which gives all pupils something to do and keeps them focused.</p>	<p><b>Managing group work and discussion</b></p>		
<p><b>Developing responsibility</b> Pupils with SEN/disabilities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• given opportunities to initiate and direct projects, with support as appropriate, and</li> <li>• involved as equal contributors in class/school governance and decision making.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Developing responsibility</b></p>		

## Adult-pupil communication

Adult-pupil communication	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Teachers' communication</b> Language is clear, unambiguous and accessible.</p> <p>Key words, meanings and symbols are highlighted, explained and written up, or available in some other way.</p> <p>Instructions are given clearly and reinforced visually, where necessary.</p> <p>Wording of questions is planned carefully, avoiding complex vocabulary and sentence structures.</p> <p>Questions are prepared in different styles/levels for different pupils – careful preparation ensures all pupils have opportunities to answer open-ended questions.</p> <p>Alternative communication modes are used, where necessary, to meet pupils' communication needs, eg signing, Braille.</p> <p>Text, visual aids, etc are checked for clarity and accessibility. For example, some pupils might require adapted printed materials (font, print size, background, Braille, symbols); some may require simplified or raised diagrams or described pictures.</p>	<p><b>Teachers' communication</b> Recognise that the language of RE may be challenging for many pupils, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>language used in religious texts may be difficult to understand and will need to be explained</li> <li>some vocabulary can have different meanings in different contexts, and</li> <li>metaphor, eg in the sayings of religious leaders or parables, can be interpreted literally by some pupils, thus creating confusion or misunderstanding.</li> </ul> <p>Plan to teach new vocabulary explicitly at the start of a new topic. Make sure that pre-tutoring on RE vocabulary is available for pupils, where appropriate.</p> <p>It may be necessary to present the same information in a range of different ways to aid understanding.</p>		

Adult-pupil communication	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Pupils' communication</b> Alternative communication modes, such as sign or symbol systems, are encouraged, and pupils' contributions are valued.</p> <p>Advice is sought from the SENCO, a speech and language therapist, local authority advisory staff, and/or the pupil themselves on the best way of using such communication modes in lessons.</p> <p>Discussion of experiences and investigations is encouraged to help pupils understand them.</p>	<p><b>Pupils' communication</b></p>		
<p><b>Pupil-teacher interaction</b> Where appropriate, pupils are allowed time to discuss the answers to questions in pairs, before the teacher requests verbal responses.</p> <p>Pupils with communication impairments are given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time to think about questions before being required to respond</li> <li>• time to explain, and</li> <li>• respect for their responses to questions and contributions to discussions.</li> </ul> <p>Additional adults prepare pupils to contribute to feedback sessions, where necessary.</p>	<p><b>Pupil-teacher interaction</b></p>		



## Formative assessment/assessment for learning

Formative assessment/ assessment for learning	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Understanding the aims of the lesson</b> Lesson objectives are made clear in pictures/symbols/writing, as appropriate.</p> <p>Objectives are challenging yet achievable. This will promote self-esteem and enable all pupils to achieve success.</p>	<p><b>Understanding the aims of the lesson</b> Build up a chart (using a wallchart or other space) to show each lesson's focus and how successive lessons/topics link together to develop an area of work in RE. This could include symbols, images, or objects to make it more accessible.</p>		
<p><b>Focus on how pupils learn</b> Pupils' own ways of learning and remembering things are emphasised.</p> <p>Pupils are encouraged to talk about how they achieved something. Dialogue is the key to successful assessment for learning. Teachers communicate in ways pupils are comfortable with.</p>	<p><b>Focus on how pupils learn</b></p>		
<p><b>Pupils know where they are in relation to learning aims</b> End-of-lesson discussions focus on one or more of the ideas explored and the progress that pupils have made towards them during the lesson.</p> <p>Pupils are encouraged to look back to previous work/photos/records to see how much progress they have made.</p> <p>Half-termly or termly self-assessment sheets are used for pupils to assess their progress – a range of recording methods is accepted.</p>	<p><b>Pupils know where they are in relation to learning aims</b> Revisiting a mind map of the same area of learning, say after three weeks of studying an RE topic, can be a good way of assessing – through the added 'branches' of the map – how pupils' understanding of concepts is developing. This approach can be particularly valuable for pupils for whom oral and written communication present a barrier, as pictures and symbols can be included.</p>		

Formative assessment/ assessment for learning	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Giving feedback</b></p> <p>Marking and other feedback helps pupils improve their performance. Feedback is given in an appropriate form – verbally, in writing.</p> <p>Specific, rather than general, feedback is given. Comments are positive, explicit and evaluative.</p> <p>Emphasis is on the pupils' progress and achievement. Weaknesses are presented as areas for development. Opportunities are offered for pupils to attempt a piece of work again. These approaches are particularly useful for pupils who find it difficult to receive comments about improving their work.</p> <p>Praise is given discreetly where pupils find public praise embarrassing or difficult.</p>	<p><b>Giving feedback</b></p>		
<p><b>Understanding assessment criteria</b></p> <p>The number of goals/assessment criteria is kept small.</p> <p>Teachers talk to pupils about what they are trying to achieve.</p> <p>Pupils are involved in setting their own goals. Some pupils may find it difficult to understand the need for targets. Others may need time and support in target setting.</p> <p>Self-assessment and peer assessment are encouraged. Pupils are taught to use the language of assessment, eg "better...".</p> <p>Peer marking is encouraged, where buddies can evaluate each other's work in relation to success criteria.</p>	<p><b>Understanding assessment criteria</b></p>		

Formative assessment/ assessment for learning	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Reviewing progress and helping pupils to improve</b></p> <p>Teachers' responses to pupils' errors recognise, value and build on the thinking that led to them.</p> <p>End-of-lesson discussion considers the ways of working the class has found fruitful or difficult. Pupils are asked, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• which key words, concepts, skills or processes were difficult and why, and how this could be improved</li> <li>• which parts of a task slowed them down, and</li> <li>• what could be done to make things go more efficiently.</li> </ul> <p>Some pupils may have anxieties about planning to improve, especially if it involves editing or redoing a task. Pupils are encouraged to see how they've improved on their previous best.</p>	<p><b>Reviewing progress and helping pupils to improve</b></p> <p>Discussing misconceptions in RE prevents pupils becoming inhibited by fear of mistakes.</p> <p>Avoid a culture of 'right answers'. RE deals with belief and opinion. Some pupils may find it hard to see beyond a 'black and white' view of issues.</p> <p>Ask pupils what could be done to make things more efficient, eg using digital images taken while on a visit to illustrate a report, rather than drawing illustrations by hand.</p>		
<p><b>Gathering assessment evidence</b></p> <p>A range of sources of assessment evidence is drawn upon.</p> <p>Assessment looks at what pupils know and can do, not at labels associated with SEN and/or disabilities.</p> <p>Notes made about individual pupils' difficulties/successes in the lesson take account of their oral contributions as well as their written work.</p>	<p><b>Gathering assessment evidence</b></p> <p>Invite pupils to comment on a key issue in RE, reformulating it to check understanding.</p>		

## Motivation

Motivation	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Understanding the structure of the lesson</b></p> <p>Pupils are clear about the duration and overall structure of the lesson. Visual timetables or other devices are used to indicate the structure and progress of lessons.</p>	<p><b>Understanding the structure of the lesson</b></p>		
<p><b>Relevant and motivating tasks</b></p> <p>Tasks motivate pupils. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stimulate interest and enthusiasm</li> <li>• are challenging but manageable</li> <li>• draw on real and familiar contexts</li> <li>• are relevant to pupils' lives, and</li> <li>• build on previous learning in the subject and in other areas of the curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Relevant and motivating tasks</b></p> <p>Draw on the breadth of curriculum possibilities to teach RE issues, including issues related to SEN and/or disabilities – eg using literature to take forward discussion of emotional and moral issues; using music to encourage reflection time for pupils who find silence hard to cope with; and making RE learning part of everyday activities and shared events, such as assemblies.</p> <p>Draw on pupils' personal experiences to offer concrete examples of the concept being explored and make sure that the context of discussions is relevant to pupils' lives – eg discussing fairness in the abstract can be off-putting; to discuss it in the context of an issue in the playground or the rules of a sport can be more relevant and engaging.</p> <p>Use devices to enable pupils to comfortably consider issues which are personal to them.</p> <p>Ensure that pupils are comfortable with how the ideas explored have been left, particularly if issues of personal belief have been discussed.</p>		
<p><b>Reward systems</b></p> <p>Pupils understand reward systems and are motivated to achieve the rewards available.</p>	<p><b>Reward systems</b></p>		

## Memory/consolidation

Memory/consolidation	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Recapping</b> Recap learning from the previous lesson.</p> <p>Main points from the lesson are fed back by pupils, noted down and saved so pupils can refer to them.</p>	<p><b>Recapping</b></p>		
<p><b>Reducing reliance on memory</b> The amount of material to be remembered is reduced. Repeat or display important information.</p> <p>The meaningfulness and familiarity of the material is increased.</p> <p>Mental processing and explanations of complex tasks are simplified.</p> <p>The use of memory aids is encouraged. These can include wallcharts and posters, useful spellings, personalised dictionaries, cubes, counters, abacus, Unifix blocks, number lines, multiplication grids, calculators, memory cards, audio recorders and computer software.</p> <p>Activities are structured so that pupils can use available resources, such as word banks.</p> <p>Strategies, including using ICT-based records, are used to reduce the need for pupils to rely on their short- or long-term memories.</p> <p>New learning fits into the framework of what the pupil already knows.</p> <p>Teaching assistants prepare pupils to contribute to feedback sessions, where appropriate.</p>	<p><b>Reducing reliance on memory</b> Pupils can become confused between the different faiths. It is often better to concentrate learning – and display – on one faith at a time, rather than try to follow a theme through different faiths. If the school's curriculum requires the latter, try to clarify the different faiths in displays and resources.</p> <p>Consider ways of supporting pupils' recall – eg use a digital camera to capture the stages of an activity or the sights of a visit for future reference. Images can also be used to build a visual or audio-visual record.</p> <p>Simple audio recording devices can replace the need for written notes during activities or visits.</p>		

Memory/consolidation	Religious education	Observed	Tried out
<p><b>Consolidating learning</b> Pupils' understanding is checked, eg by inviting pupils to reformulate key learning.</p> <p>Using visual or concrete ('real') materials, or activities involving movement, to reinforce or consolidate learning through a range of sensory channels.</p> <p>Reteach or revise material, where necessary, eg post-lesson tutoring.</p> <p>Opportunities are provided for pupils to repeat and reinforce previously learnt skills and processes on a regular basis, in similar and different contexts.</p> <p>Encourage pupils to develop their own strategies, eg an agreed approach to asking for help, rehearsal, note-taking, use of long-term memory, and place-keeping and organisational strategies.</p>	<p><b>Consolidating learning</b></p>		
<p><b>Independent study/homework</b> Independent study/homework is explained during the lesson, not at the end, to make sure it is understood and recorded. Teachers check all pupils are clear about homework tasks.</p> <p>Homework tasks are accessible after the lesson, eg published on a noticeboard or on the school learning platform, so pupils can return to them, if necessary, after the lesson.</p>	<p><b>Independent study/homework</b></p>		

## 4 Religious education and Every Child Matters

In 2003, the green paper 'Every Child Matters: Change for children' was published. The key outcomes for the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda were drawn up after consultation with children, young people and families. The five outcomes that mattered most to children and young people are set out below. Each of the outcomes can be addressed through the religious education curriculum.

Outcome	General educational aspects	Through the RE curriculum
<b>Be healthy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work towards independent learning</li> <li>• Actively enquire about differing environments</li> <li>• Keep mentally and emotionally healthy</li> </ul>	<p>Know that there are different faith communities.</p> <p>Know about religious ideas towards diet, drugs, alcohol, etc.</p> <p>Develop awareness of the religious use of reflection, prayer, meditation and stilling.</p>
<b>Stay safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep safe in school and on school trips</li> <li>• Have stability and security</li> <li>• Know about their place in the wider community</li> </ul>	<p>Know about religious codes of conduct. Link these to rights and responsibilities.</p> <p>Know about the importance of family and community.</p>
<b>Enjoy and achieve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve personal and social development</li> <li>• Enjoy lessons</li> <li>• Achieve to their potential</li> <li>• Use alternatives to written recording, where appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Learn about themselves and others through exploring religions.</p> <p>Communicate their ideas in a variety of ways.</p>
<b>Make a positive contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand issues of difference and diversity through studying other environments and cultures</li> <li>• Understand about, and support, the local community</li> <li>• Involve themselves in extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>	<p>Develop respect and understanding between people of different faiths.</p>
<b>Achieve economic well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about ways to ensure their own economic well-being in the future</li> <li>• Experience visits from people who do various jobs</li> <li>• Visit different workplaces</li> <li>• Learn about different economies in different countries</li> </ul>	<p>Reflect on spiritual and ethical matters, responsible use of money, the importance of giving, and the ethics of wealth, debt, poverty and gambling.</p>

## 5 Early development in the National Curriculum: the P scales for religious education

For pupils working below level 1 of the National Curriculum, performance descriptions (P scales) for RE can be used to describe a 'best fit' for a pupil's performance.

All schools must report on pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage in terms of both P scales and national curriculum levels.

**P scales 1–3** address very early levels of learning and are the same in all subjects, but illustrated with subject-specific examples. For example, **P1 (ii)** includes: "They may give intermittent reactions, for example, vocalising occasionally during group celebrations and acts of worship." **P3 (i)** indicates: "They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, for example, stroking or shaking artefacts or found objects."

As a trainee teacher, you may not meet pupils assessed at these very early levels very often. If you have to teach these pupils during your placements, you should expect a great deal of support in differentiating teaching and learning.

From **P4**, each subject has its own progression. For example:

At **P5**, pupils respond appropriately to simple questions about familiar religious events or experiences.

At **P6**, pupils show concern and sympathy for others in distress.

At **P7**, pupils communicate their ideas about religion, life events and experiences in simple phrases.

At **P8**, pupils are often sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and show respect for themselves and others.

The full P scales for religious education are set out in QCA's Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties: Religious education (please see section 7).

From **P8**, pupils move to the national curriculum levels.

While a typically developing child will have achieved **P8** by the age of four, some pupils will take considerably longer.

At all times you should be aware of the need to respect the developmental maturity of the pupils you are planning for. Choose materials and tasks appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. This is a particular issue when using software and other published resources.



## 6 Bilingual learners

**"Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught."**  
SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001)

**Pupils must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty because they are learning English as an additional language (EAL).**

Bilingual learners take up to two years to develop basic communication skills (street and playground survival language).

Some pupils may take a long time before they feel confident enough to actively take part in classroom activities and use the English they have learnt. A 'silent' period is typical of this learning and should not be seen as a learning difficulty.

Many learners with EAL do not acquire language in the same way as first language learners. A pupil may be fluent orally but struggle considerably with reading or writing; or a pupil may be very literate in written English, but lack confidence in the rapid flow of speech required in conversational dialogue. It is therefore important to assess language competence in all language modes and not to assume a level of competence based on performance in one mode.

'A Language in Common' (QCA, 2000) is a common assessment scale that can be used to gauge where pupils are in their acquisition of English. It gives assessment steps for pupils with EAL working below national curriculum level 1 and is useful in helping teachers reach a common understanding of the nature of each step or level of language acquisition. It also shows how the information can be used for target setting and what support may be needed to ensure progress.

Another useful resource is 'Assessing the Needs of Bilingual Pupils: Living in two languages' by Deryn Hall.

When a class or subject teacher feels that a lack of progress in a bilingual pupil's learning may be due to a learning difficulty (SEN or disability) they should consult the SENCO or inclusion manager and work with them to develop an appropriate response.

## 7 Sources of information and advice

### Publications

Broadbent, L and Brown, A, Religious Education and Pupils with Special Needs: A dialogue, in Brown, A, 2002, Issues in Religious Education, Routledge Falmer

Brown, E, 1996, Religious Education for All, David Fulton Publishers

Davis, P and Florian, L, 2004, Teaching Strategies and Approaches for Pupils with Special Educational Needs: A Scoping Study, DfES Research Report RR516

Hall, D, 2001, Assessing the Needs of Bilingual Pupils: Living in two languages, David Fulton Publishers

North West Regional SEN Partnership, 2004, Children with Autism: Strategies for accessing the curriculum: Religious education, DfES

QCA, 2000, A Language in Common: Assessing English as an additional language

QCA, 2009, Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties: Religious education – available online at: [www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/P\\_scales\\_RE.pdf](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/P_scales_RE.pdf)

### Farmington Institute, Farmington Fellows' Reports

[www.farmington.ac.uk/documents/reports/index.html](http://www.farmington.ac.uk/documents/reports/index.html) (select 'Author Index'):

Attwell, D, 2001, Tell Me About It (Oral work/SpLD)

Brogden, D, 2000, The Use of Stories in Religious Education to Encourage Language in Primary-Aged Children with Severe Learning Difficulties

Brown, L, 2001, Multi-sensory Religious Education

Drinkwater, L, 2001, A Scheme of Work for RE in the Early Years for Children with Special Needs

Eaton, S, 2001, Sing a New Song (A religious education curriculum for children with autistic spectrum disorders)

Ferris, E, 2001, Developing Religious Multi-sensory Story Sacks and Sensory Boxes (RE for children with severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities)

Heys, T, 2003, The Assessment of RE at KS1 for Children with Global or Specific Speech and/or Language Difficulties

Kirk, G, 2007, Teaching the SACRE Element 'Relationships and Responsibilities' to Children with Severe and Complex Needs and those within the Autistic Spectrum

McLaughlin, J, Teaching Religious and Moral Education and Enhancing the Self-Esteem of Pupils with MLD

Murrell, S, 2001, Faith in a Box: RE for pupils with SLD, PMLD and Autism

Tarbox, J, 2002, Making Sense (Sensory RE)

Toothill, R, 2001, Appraising RE Resources for Primary Children with Special Needs

Walton, B, 2001, Teaching RE to Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Weightman, E, Affirming RE: RE for pupils with SEN

## Websites

Directory of Educational Websites: Religious education:

**[www.additionalneeds.net/Online\\_Learning/religioused.htm](http://www.additionalneeds.net/Online_Learning/religioused.htm)**

Although aimed at KS3, the links should offer useful information for planning religious education studies.

Isle of Wight Council, 2002, Inclusion in Religious Education: Providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils in religious education:

**<http://eduwight.iow.gov.uk/curriculum/foundation/re/iow/images/21Inclusion.pdf>**

National Curriculum: Religious education:

**<http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/religious-education/keystage1/index.aspx?return=/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/index.aspx>**

**[www.immersiveeducation.com](http://www.immersiveeducation.com)** (for KarZouche<sup>1</sup>) – a selection of resources to aid teaching

**[www.reonline.org.uk](http://www.reonline.org.uk)**

**[www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)** – a selection of resources to aid teaching

1 Where this booklet refers to a specific product, no recommendation or endorsement of that product is intended, nor should be inferred.

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