Why Teach RE?

Whether we are religious or not there are signs of religion all around, the landscape is full of churches and of other places of worship. Belonging to an organised religion has an effect on many aspects of a person's life. Any of these may show the rest of the world that we are members of a belief tradition, clothes, food, names, times and ways of celebration and what is considered important in life.
Religious education promotes pupils' understanding of the multicultural and multi faith society that we live in today by enabling them to explore issues of belief and issues between faiths. Having learned about different faiths and beliefs, pupils are then encouraged to understand how we can interact with each other and explore inter faith issues of contemporary society.

Pupils, whether they have a faith or not, need to be given an awareness of what life is like from a religious point of view. A knowledge and understanding of the features, ideas and practices of the focused religions in each key stage is important, so that the pupil can distinguish between the religions and understand what religion entails.
There is a need to appreciate the values and attitudes which individuals in a faith group hold true and the effects that these have on the community. Schools have a duty to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils and, although it is important that the school ethos and all subjects to contribute towards this, religious education has a large part to play.

Religious Education in schools should aim to:

- develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principle religions and other world views other than their own
- develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faith, traditions, beliefs and values are different from their own
- help pupils explore and test their own beliefs and to learn about those of fellow pupils
- express and explore pupils' own responses to ultimate questions about the meaning and purpose of life, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human
- explore pupils' own beliefs, values, traditions
- articulate own and others' views, ideas and beliefs on a range of contemporary issues
- explore the influence of family, friends, media, teachings, texts and guidance from moral/religious leaders on beliefs, moral choices and identity

Effective Religious Education will support the rest of the school curriculum to help students to:

- develop curiosity and imagination
- develop the skills of communication, interpretation, application, analysis and evaluation
- develop their own sense of identity and belonging

Religious Education will also contribute to schools in:

- promoting racial and religious respect
- celebrating diversity in society through understanding differences
- offering opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development
- supporting pupils to value themselves and others

Legal Position

In the 1988 Education Reform Act it is stated that 'Every maintained school is required by law to provide a basic curriculum, which is 'broad and balanced', consisting of: a] religious education and b] the National Curriculum. The curriculum provided must 'promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental, and physical development of pupils' and 'prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'.

Each LEA must convene an Agreed Syllabus conference to produce a syllabus, which, once adopted by the LEA should be reviewed every 5 years. The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education must monitor and evaluate the implementation of the syllabus and its impact.

The Education Act 1996 states that the Agreed Syllabus must reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking into account the teachings and practices of the other principal religions and worldviews represented in Great Britain.

An Agreed Syllabus, and Religious Education taught according to it, must not be designed to urge a particular religion or worldview on pupils. See Inclusive

Further, while exploring responses to ultimate questions, non-religious worldviews- such as secular Humanism- should also be considered (as per section 10 of the Equality Act 2010).

Schools are further advised to include in their pupils' learning the additional religions and worldviews where there are adherents in the school community.

It is a statutory requirement that Religious Education must be taught according to this syllabus must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools (other voluntary aided schools of a religious character, or academies where stated in their funding agreements) from Reception and including sixth form, except when withdrawn by their parents (see below). Religious Education remains a legal requirement for pupils in KS4 and KS5. It is the duty of the Head teacher to secure the provision of Religious Education for their pupils.

By Law RE is to be taught in all years from Reception to Year 13, and this syllabus is based on the expectation that RE will have a minimum of 5% of annual curriculum time, which should broadly equate to:

36 hours at Key Stage 1
45 hours at Key Stage 2
45 hours at Key Stage 3
40-48 hours at Key Stage 4 and 5
At Post 16, there should be a minimum of 15 hours a year of RE

Collective Worship is a separate statutory requirement. Time used for this SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ALLOCATION.

Schools are also expected to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, standards and provision of the RE Syllabus.

Whilst Religious Education can support and contribute towards PSHE or citizenship education, curriculum time should not be confused or conflated with PSHE or citizenship education.

Schools are required to report to parents on pupils' progress in Religious Education annually and in accordance with the structure in this syllabus. (* and in Section on progression)

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education as per the School and Standards and Framework Act 1988. Parents of pupils may personally request that their child be excused from Religious Education and/or attendance at collective worship through reasons of religious conscience. The school should not incur any expense through this action. Teachers may also request to withdraw from attending collective worship by reasons of their religious conscience.

Pupil Choice