



Religious Education in Hertfordshire Schools

A Guide for Parents and Carers

July 2010

(Contacts up-dated 2020)

The law requires Religious Education (R.E.) to be taught in all schools and contributes to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, academic and mental development of all pupils.

R.E. – What can it offer to children and young people?

Religious Education can offer children and young people according to their ability and level of development:-

- Knowledge and understanding of some of the world's major faiths.
- An understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- The opportunity to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions.
- A focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of development.
- R.E. can help in developing an awareness of the fundamental questions of life and responding to these in the light of one's own beliefs, values and experiences.
- R.E. provides the opportunity to reflect upon, respond to and question what has been taught.
- A means for expressing personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way.
- A chance to celebrate the right of people to hold different beliefs within a religiously diverse society.
- RE develops skills, which are needed for all humanities subjects. In particular it helps children to develop sensitivity towards the views of other people.
- RE is a good qualification for work involving contact with the public or responsibility for people. Such work might include police, medicine, teaching, social work, personnel, management and scientific work with moral and ethical dimensions.

Who decides what should be taught in R.E.?

- Every local authority (LA) must have a plan for teaching Religious Education for its schools. This is called the Agreed Syllabus and is drawn up with the help of local people*.
- Denominational voluntary aided schools need not use the LA agreed syllabus but should plan their R.E. to meet the requirements of their

religious foundations as determined by the Trust Deed. This is the responsibility of the school governors.

- The 1988 Education Reform Act requires all syllabuses to 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious represented in Great Britain'.
- A new Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus was published in September 2006 after wide consultation throughout the Authority with teachers, councillors, governors, and members of faith communities.
- The headteachers and governors of schools have a duty to ensure that RE takes place within the curriculum according to the LA Agreed Syllabus.
- Teachers plan their lessons using the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for guidance. In addition, Primary and Secondary Schemes of Work have been published which give full details of how teachers might present work to pupils.
- R.E. focuses on two attainment targets, Learning About Religion and Learning From Religion.
- Every LA must have a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to advise the LA on the teaching of RE in its schools. The SACRE is made up of representatives of local education authority, teachers, the Church of England and other Christian denominations and local faith communities.

How is R.E. taught?

- Through direct teaching, enquiry, exploration, discussion, asking and answering questions, using a range of sources including artefacts, visits and ICT.
- In primary schools R.E. can be taught as a separate subject, or taught alongside other subjects.
- Younger pupils (KS1) should receive the equivalent of 45 minutes per week rising to an hour per week in the Junior years (KS2).
- Throughout secondary/middle schools, R.E. education could form part of a Humanities course, but it is more likely to be taught as a separate subject. Pupils should receive the equivalent of 1 hour and 10 minutes per week.
- It is not the job of the school to encourage or discourage your child from believing in any particular religion. That is role of parents and of their faith

community.

- The 1988 Education Reform Act separates R.E. from the act of collective worship. Time allocation for school worship/assemblies must be separate from that allocated to Religious Education.

How can I support my children's R.E.?

Your role in supporting your child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is essential to an effective home-school partnership. In addition:-

- Take an interest in what your child does in R.E. and be positive about it. At parents' evenings talk to the relevant teacher/s.
- Encourage your child to go on school visits to places of worship. If appropriate let them take religious objects or pictures to school.
- You may wish to see a copy of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus, which is available at all schools.
- You may wish to ask a question about R.E. provision at the annual parents meeting of the Governing Body of your school.

Choosing R.E. as an examination option

- There are at present Entry level, GCSE, AS and A level examinations in Religious Studies. Universities, colleges and employers respect and welcome these qualifications just like other subjects. Many schools have a short course GCSE for all pupils in Years 10 and 11, this is currently a very popular option. Students can gain:
 - An understanding of other people's points of view.
 - An opportunity to share their own views and opinions.
 - Time to consider important questions.
 - Develop their ability to listen and discuss.

What are my rights as a parent?

- To receive an annual written report of your child's progress in Religious Education.
- You have the right to withdraw your child from R.E. lessons but think carefully before you do this and discuss it with your child and your child's teacher and headteacher.

If you require further information please contact:

1. The headteacher of your child's school.

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2. Or for Voluntary Aided Church of England Schools:

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