

Exploration and Response

The Redbridge Agreed Syllabus For Religious Education 2008

Appendices

A.2 Progress through the levels

Level 1 → 2

- ♦ Explain something that people believe.
- ♦ Say what something stands for.
- ♦ Talk about something that is important to someone else, with respect.

Level 2 → 3

- ♦ Explain what someone might learn from religion, using key words.
- ♦ Describe, with examples, similar or different ways religious people do things.
- ♦ Link my beliefs with how I behave and things that influence me and other people.

Level 3 → 4

- ♦ Connect beliefs and teachings of different groups and explain what it means to belong to a religion.
- ♦ Use key words to describe religious beliefs and practices,
- ♦ Suggest how religious people might respond to questions about life and compare this with my own ideas.

Level 4 → 5

- ♦ Suggest reasons for similar and different beliefs within and between religions, showing how religious sources are used by believers.
- ♦ Use a wide range of key words to explain similarities and differences in how religious people express themselves.
- ♦ Compare my beliefs with those of others and analyse the challenges of belonging to a religion or belief system.

Level 5 → 6

- ♦ Suggest reasons for similar and different beliefs within and between religions, using different religious sources and arguments to explain the reasons for diversity.
- ♦ Explain how beliefs have had different effects on individuals, communities and societies.
- ♦ Compare my beliefs with those of others and evaluate one challenge of belonging to a religion or belief system, supporting my views with reasons and examples.

Level 6 → 7

- ♦ Explain what religious people believe and value, showing personal research and using a number of sources and evidence.
- ♦ Explain how beliefs today have been affected by the past and traditions and how belonging to a religion may mean different things to different people.
- ♦ Compare my beliefs with those of others and analyse the challenges of belonging to a religion or belief system, supporting my views with reasons and examples.

Level 7 → 8

- ♦ Explain and analyse what different people believe and value, showing personal research and placing beliefs in their historical, cultural, social and philosophical contexts.
- ♦ Weigh up in detail a wide range of beliefs and their meaning to different communities and societies in different times and places.
- ♦ Compare my beliefs and conclusions about the purpose and value of life with a wide range of others, coming to my own conclusions based on evidence, arguments, reflections and backed up with examples.

A.3 National P scale indicators

- ♦ P1 (i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, [for example, startling at sudden noises or movements]. Any participation is fully prompted.
- ♦ P1 (ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, [for example, becoming still in response to silence]. They may give intermittent reactions, [for example, vocalising occasionally during group celebrations and acts of worship].
- ♦ P2 (i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, [for example, briefly looking around in unfamiliar natural and manmade environments]. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, [for example, leaning towards the source of a light, sound or scent]. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, [for example, touching a range of religious artefacts and found objects in partnership with a member of staff].
- ♦ P2 (ii) Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, [for example, showing that they have enjoyed an experience or interaction]. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, [for example, becoming quiet and attentive during a certain piece of music]. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, [for example, repeating a simple action with an artefact]. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, [for example, performing gestures during ritual exchanges with another person performing gestures].
- ♦ P3 (i) Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, [for example, prompting a visitor to prolong an interaction]. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, [for example, stroking or shaking artefacts or found objects]. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, [for example, when vocalising in a quiet place]. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, [for example, following a familiar ritual and responding appropriately].
- ♦ P3 (ii) Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, [for example, prompting an adult to sing or play a favourite song]. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, [for example, celebrating the achievements of their peers in assembly]. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, [for example, choosing to participate in activities]. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, [for example, contemplating the flickering of a candle flame]. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, [for example, passing an artefact to a peer in order to prompt participation in a group activity].
- ♦ P4 Pupils use single elements of communication, [for example, words, gestures, signs or symbols, to express their feelings]. They show they understand 'yes' and 'no'. They begin to respond to the feelings of others, [for example, matching their emotions and laughing when another pupil is laughing]. They join in with activities by initiating ritual actions or sounds. They may demonstrate an appreciation of stillness and quietness.
- ♦ P5 Pupils respond appropriately to simple questions about familiar religious events or experiences and communicate simple meanings. They respond to a variety of new religious experiences, [for example, involving music, drama, colour, lights, food, or tactile objects]. They take part in activities involving two or three other learners. They may also engage in moments of individual reflection.
- ♦ P6 Pupils express and communicate their feelings in different ways. They respond to others in group situations and cooperate when working in small groups. Pupils listen to, and begin to respond to, familiar religious stories, poems and music, and make their own contribution to celebrations and festivals. They carry out ritualised actions in familiar circumstances. They show concern and sympathy for others in distress, [for example, through gestures, facial expressions or by offering comfort]. They start to be aware of their own influence on events and other people.
- ♦ P7 Pupils listen to and follow religious stories. They communicate their ideas about religion, life events and experiences in simple phrases. They evaluate their own work and behaviour in simple ways, beginning to identify some actions as right or wrong on the basis of the consequences. They find out about aspects of religion through stories, music or drama, answer questions and communicate their responses. They may communicate their feelings about what is special to them, [for example, using role play]. They begin to understand that other people have needs and to respect these. They make purposeful relationships with others in group activity.
- ♦ P8 Pupils listen attentively to religious stories or to people talking about religion. They begin to understand that religious and other stories carry moral and religious meaning. They are increasingly able to communicate ideas, feelings or responses to experiences or to retell religious stories. They communicate simple facts about religion and important people in religions. They begin to realise the significance of religious artefacts, symbols and places. They reflect on what makes them happy, sad, excited or lonely. They demonstrate a basic understanding of what is right and wrong in familiar situations. They are often sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and show respect for themselves and others. They treat living things and their environment with care and concern.

B1 Supplementary Units Easter and Christmas (Key Stages 1 and 2)

These Units are designed to progressively develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the key Christian festivals.

Year 1: How do we know that Easter is coming?

This unit provides an exploration of the customs associated with Lent and Easter, for example: Pancake Day (Shrove Tuesday), Ash Wednesday, hot cross buns, Easter eggs, signs of new life.

- ♦ What signs tell us that Easter is coming?
- ♦ What do our senses tell us about the coming festival of Easter?
- ♦ What feelings do we have about Easter and springtime?
- ♦ How do Christians prepare for Easter?

How do we know that Christmas is coming?

This unit provides an exploration of the sights, sounds, tastes and touch associated with Advent and Christmas:

Sight (Advent calendars and candles, tree decorations, Advent wreaths)

sound (bells, Christmas music)

taste (different types of food)

touch (wrapped presents)

activities (sending cards, buying presents)

- ♦ What signs are there around us that Christmas is coming?
- ♦ What do our senses tell us about Christmas coming?
- ♦ What feelings do we have about Christmas coming?
- ♦ How do Christian families prepare for Christmas in their homes and churches?

Year 2: What special story is told at Easter?

This unit provides an opportunity for pupils to explore different tellings of the Easter story. The Easter Story by Brian Wildsmith or Easter by Gail Gibbons might be useful here.

- ♦ What is the storyline of the Easter story?
- ♦ What do we think about when we hear the story?
- ♦ How do different books (eg picture books, text books) show the Easter story?
- ♦ How can we tell the Easter story to others?

What special story is told at Christmas?

This unit provides an opportunity for pupils to explore different tellings or enactments of the traditional Christmas story. They could explore the key characters, their roles and feelings through nativity plays, books and pictures and key words.

- ♦ What do we already know about the Christmas story?
- ♦ What do we learn from listening to the Christmas story?
- ♦ Who are they key characters and what are their roles?
- ♦ How can we make our own nativity play?

Year 3: How is Easter represented in art and music?

This unit provides an opportunity for pupils to explore the festival of Easter through art and music, through for example, Easter cards , decorated eggs , famous Easter paintings, the Stations of the Cross , the crucifix and different kinds of cross and through music such as Handel's Messiah or Easter songs and hymns.

- ♦ What special symbols are used at Easter and why?
- ♦ What do Easter cards tell us about the festival?
- ♦ How is the crucifixion of Jesus shown in art?
- ♦ How does Christian music communicate the feeling of Easter?

How is Christmas represented in art and music?

This unit provides an opportunity for pupils to explore the festival of Christmas through art and music, through for example, Christmas cards , famous Nativity paintings, Madonna and Child scenes, South American retablo , crib scenes and through Christmas carols and classic musical pieces

- ♦ What do paintings of the Nativity tell us about the importance of the event?
- ♦ How is the Madonna and Child represented in art, including in icons and sculpture?
- ♦ How do different cultures and ages represent the nativity scene?
- ♦ What do the words of carols convey about the importance of Christmas to Christians?

Year 4: How do Christians remember the events of Holy Week?

This unit enables pupils to develop their knowledge of the key events which Christians remember during the festival of Easter, specifically, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday

- ◆ What are the key events associated with Holy Week?
- ◆ How are these events shown in images and words?
- ◆ How do Christians today remember and relive these events?
- ◆ How can we show the events of Holy Week?

What is the significance of light at Advent and Christmas?

This unit enables pupils to explore the festival of Christmas through one of its most powerful symbols, light. For Christians, the 'light' represents the light of Christ, God's Son, coming into the world in the person of Jesus. This can be explored through the traditions of Advent candles and wreaths, the lighting of Christingles, and through customs associated with St. Lucia.

- ◆ What is the importance of light in our lives?
- ◆ What special symbolism does light have at Advent and Christmas?
- ◆ What other festivals use light as a theme?
- ◆ How can we use the symbolism of light to talk about our own experiences?

Year 5: Why is Easter important to Christians?

This unit focuses on the key themes within the Easter story for Christians, death and resurrection. Pupils could speak to Christians about their beliefs and explore their responses to the crucifix and empty cross. Pupils could respond to the themes in practical ways, for example, by designing a picture/mural/model to symbolise new life

- ◆ What does Jesus' death and resurrection mean to Christians?
- ◆ How do artists show the themes of Jesus' death and resurrection?
- ◆ How do Christians around the world remember Easter?
- ◆ What images can we create to symbolise the theme of resurrection or new life?

Why is Christmas important to Christians?

This unit focuses on the key theme within the Christmas story for Christians, the theme of incarnation, that is, God coming into the world in the person of Jesus. Christian visitors might be invited to class to answer questions and pupils could explore how Christian beliefs are contained in Christmas carols and visual representation.

- ◆ Who was Jesus?
- ◆ What does his birth symbolise for Christians?
- ◆ How would Christians celebrate Jesus' birth?
- ◆ How do Christians around the world celebrate Jesus' birth?

Year 6: What are the sources of the story about the first Easter Sunday?

This unit begins to introduce pupils to the different tellings of the Easter story in the Gospels. Pupils could begin to explore the similarities and differences in two of the Gospel accounts and consider why there are these differences. They could also look at other stories which have developed from the original stories and consider what provides the focus for these tellings. The story of The Three Trees or the legend of how the donkey got the cross on its back could be included here.

- ◆ What do people know about the Easter story and where do their ideas come from?
- ◆ How do the different Gospels tell the Easter story?
- ◆ What other stories explore Easter themes?
- ◆ What stories can we create together which use the themes and symbols of Easter?

What are the sources of the familiar Christmas story?

The unit begins to introduce pupils to the different tellings of the Christmas story in the Gospels, specifically in Luke and Matthew, and begin to consider why there are these differences. Pupils could also look at other stories which have developed from the original stories and consider the reasons for the particular focus in these stories. Stories such as Baboushka, Papa Panov and The Fourth Wise Man could be included here.

- ◆ Where does the familiar Christmas story come from?
- ◆ What differences are there in the accounts given by Luke and Matthew?
- ◆ What themes are shared by traditional Christmas children's stories?
- ◆ What story or play can we create based on traditional Christmas themes?

B2 : Supplementary Units: Celebration, Festival and Community

These provide an opportunity for schools to develop units appropriate to their own particular situations and needs. They are an opportunity to involve local faith communities, governors and parents alongside pupils in a range of creative explorations of religion.

Year 1: What celebrations are important in our school?

- ◆ When do we celebrate?
- ◆ What do we celebrate?
- ◆ What stories do we tell?
- ◆ What symbols and songs do we use?

Year 2: What celebration can we design to mark a special time in our school? Or what stories are told about members of our community?

- ◆ What are our special times in school?
- ◆ Who are the special people in our school?
- ◆ How can we mark the beginning or end of each term?
- ◆ How could we mark a birthday?
- ◆ How could we welcome a new person to our class?

Year 3: How and why do Hindus celebrate Holi (or another festival)?

- ◆ What stories do Hindus tell at Holi?
- ◆ How do Hindus remember the stories of Krishna when he was a small child?
- ◆ Why do Hindus throw colours at Holi?
- ◆ Can we learn a Hindu dance for Holi?

What celebration can we design to mark a special time in our class or year group?

- ◆ What do we need for a celebration?
- ◆ How do we choose music and songs for a special time?
- ◆ Will we have any special objects – candles, cards or gifts?
- ◆ How will we end our celebration?

Year 4: Why is Sukkot (or another festival) special for Jews?

- ◆ Why does the Jewish community celebrate Sukkot?
- ◆ What stories are told at Sukkot?
- ◆ How can we build a sukkah in our classroom/school?
- ◆ Can we learn a special song at Sukkot?

How can we celebrate through music, dance, art and symbol thankfulness for the natural world?

- ◆ What aspects of the natural world are special to us?
- ◆ How could we represent these aspects through art?
- ◆ How could we represent these aspects through music and dance?
- ◆ What words would we need to show our thankfulness for the natural world?

Year 5: Why is fasting during Ramadan and feasting during Eid ul-Fitr important parts of Muslim worship?

- ◆ What part does food play in our daily life?
- ◆ Why do Muslims fast during Ramadan?
- ◆ What is it like to go without food and drink even for a short time?
- ◆ What do Muslims try to focus on instead of eating?
- ◆ Could we mark Ramadan and Eid with our Muslim friends?

How can we celebrate either Remembrance Day (November OR Holocaust Memorial Day (January) through a variety of forms (silence, dance, words, music etc)?

- ◆ what things do people do to remember important events or times?
- ◆ What words do we need to help us remember sad times?
- ◆ How can we remember through silence?
- ◆ What actions should we have to help us remember?

Year 6: Why is Diwali (or another festival) important for the Sikh community?

- ◆ When is Diwali celebrated by the Sikh community?
- ◆ What story/stories do Sikhs tell about Guru Hargobind at Diwali?
- ◆ How do Sikhs celebrate in the gurdwara?

How could we design a leavers' celebration that involves everyone, religious or not, in a meaningful and imaginative way?

- ◆ What special things will we remember about the people who are leaving us?
- ◆ How will they remember their time at our school?
- ◆ What will they take with them to their next schools?
- ◆ What songs and symbols will help us to say goodbye?

C1 Extended key questions related to the principal religious traditions: Key Stage 3

Relating to the Christian experience:

- ♦ what do people think a 'Christian' person is? eg ideas at home, amongst friends and in the community; images in the media; common stereotypes; pupil perceptions; faith statements;
- ♦ are all Christians the same?
- ♦ what does justice mean to Christians today? eg the environment; relationships; personal behaviour; political structures;
- ♦ how do the creative and expressive arts challenge and inspire Christians? eg architecture; dance; drama; visual arts (including cinema); music; folk art;
- ♦ what does the Resurrection of Jesus mean for Christians today? eg what happened at the first Easter; the meaning of Resurrection; issues of life and death; the meaning of Resurrection for Christians today;
- ♦ what is the evidence for Christianity in our locality?
- ♦ what does Jesus' Incarnation mean for Christians today? eg ideas about the Messiah; the birth of Jesus; the importance of Christmas as a Christian festival;
- ♦ what kinds of issues are Christians concerned about today? eg fair trade and poverty; the environment; relationships; prejudice and discrimination; inter-church work;
- ♦ what helps Christians to keep going? membership of the church body; worship; prayer and meditation; Bible-study; ritual; devotional exercises (eg reading an icon); community involvement; rites of passage;
- ♦ is being a Christian an easy option? eg the challenges of living in a secular, consumerist society; the preoccupation with the outward rather than the inward; the lives of Christians that have demonstrated Christian discipleship and shaped and challenged society; views of Christians in the community; and
- ♦ how do Christians relate to those of other faiths, traditions or world views?

Relating to the Buddhist experience:

- ♦ what do people think that a 'Buddhist' person is? eg ideas at home, amongst friends and in the community; images in the media; common stereotypes; pupil perceptions; faith statements;
- ♦ what do Buddhists think that the nature of human life is all about? eg dukkha (suffering, unsatisfactoriness); the Four Noble Truths; the Eightfold Path;
- ♦ what is special about the Buddha for Buddhists? eg his life and the Four Sights; enlightenment; teachings; rupas (images of the Buddha);
- ♦ what is the evidence for Buddhism in our locality?
- ♦ how might being a Buddhist affect everyday life? eg meditation; festivals and special times; visits to Buddhist centres; ethics and attitudes;
- ♦ what kinds of issues are Buddhists concerned about today? eg living in a non-Buddhist society; modesty and sexuality; the environment;
- ♦ what does dukkah mean for Buddhists today? eg nibbana, anikka, anatta;
- ♦ are all Buddhists the same? eg different forms of Buddhism; new movements;
- ♦ how has Buddhism influenced people in the West? eg examples of well-known Western Buddhists; the Dalai Lama and Tibet; monasteries and centres in Britain;
- ♦ is being a Buddhist an easy option? eg the challenges of living in a secular, consumerist society; the preoccupation with the outward rather than the inward; and
- ♦ how do Buddhists relate to those of other faiths and none?

Relating to the Hindu experience:

- ♦ what do people think that a 'Hindu' person is? eg ideas at home, amongst friends and in the community; images in the media; common stereotypes; pupil perceptions; faith statements;
- ♦ are all Hindus the same?
- ♦ how might being a Hindu affect everyday life? eg marriage and the importance of the family; food; thinking (eg about stages in life); festivals and special times; customs; worship at home at in the mandir; rules of living; significance of and contacts with India;
- ♦ what is the evidence for Hinduism in our locality?
- ♦ how do Hindus understand God? eg diversity of images; many gods but monotheistic (and analogies to explain this);
- ♦ what do Hindu stories teach Hindus about the way the world is? eg interpretation; symbolism; examples;
- ♦ what kinds of issues are Hindus concerned about today? eg living in a non-Hindu society; arranged or love marriages; the environment;
- ♦ how are Hindu beliefs and values expressed in creative and artistic ways? eg murtis; dance; music; pictures, posters and patterns; drama; architecture;
- ♦ what does reincarnation mean for Hindus today? eg samsara, karma, moksha, atman;
- ♦ is being a Hindu an easy option? eg the challenges of living in a secular, consumerist society; the preoccupation with the outward rather than the inward; whether to be vegetarian; and
- ♦ how do Hindus relate to those of other faiths and none?

Relating to the Jewish experience:

- ♦ what do people think that a 'Jewish' person is? eg ideas at home, amongst friends and in the community; images in the media; common stereotypes; pupil perceptions; faith statements;
- ♦ are all Jews the same?
- ♦ how might being Jewish affect everyday life? eg home; food; dress; weekly, yearly and lifetime cycle; education and learning; story-telling tradition;
- ♦ why is Pesach (Passover) so significant to Jews throughout the world? eg underlying concepts (freedom, covenant etc); Exodus; the seder meal;
- ♦ why is Israel so important for Jewish people? eg geographical location; modern history; the Temple and the Western Wall; Israel as the location of the Jewish nation in ancient times;
- ♦ how do Jewish people make sense of suffering? eg variety of interpretation; the Shoah (Holocaust);
- ♦ what kinds of issues are Jews concerned about today? eg living in a non-Jewish society; relationships and sexuality; the environment; justice;
- ♦ what is the evidence for Judaism in our locality?

- ♦ what does covenant mean for Jews today? eg mitzvoh, Torah, kashrut, brit milah;
- ♦ is being a Jew an easy option? eg the challenges of living in a secular, consumerist society; the preoccupation with the outward rather than the inward; anti-Semitism; maintaining traditions and religious requirements; and
- ♦ how do Jewish people relate to those of other faiths and none?

Relating to the Muslim experience:

- ♦ what do people think a 'Muslim' person is? eg ideas at home, amongst friends and in the community; images in the media; common stereotypes; pupil perceptions; faith statements;
- ♦ are all Muslims the same?
- ♦ what kinds of issues are Muslims concerned about today? eg living in a non-Muslim society; intermarriage; modesty and sexuality; alcohol and gambling; the environment; relationships and race;
- ♦ what do Muslims understand by Allah (God)? eg tawhid (Oneness); Creator; the human as an abd (servant); 99 Names; the first of the Five Pillars (Shahadah); expression in calligraphy, Arabesque, architecture;
- ♦ what is the significance of Muhammad for Muslims? eg risalah (belief in line of prophets); Muhammad the final prophet; model; historical context; founder of the first Muslim community (Madinah); revelation of the Qur'an;
- ♦ what is the evidence for Islam in our locality?
- ♦ where do Muslims get their strength from? eg community; Qur'an and hadith; the Five Pillars (including the experience of going on Hajj);
- ♦ is being a Muslim an easy option? eg the challenges of living in a secular, consumerist society; the preoccupation with the outward rather than the inward; Islamophobia and the media; dress and appearance; and
- ♦ how do Muslims relate to those of other faiths and none?

Relating to the Sikh experience:

- ♦ what do people think that a 'Sikh' person is? eg ideas at home, amongst friends and in the community; images in the media; common stereotypes; pupil perceptions; faith statements;
- ♦ are all Sikhs the same? eg diversity as shown in commitment and appearance; Sikhs who are amrit-dhari and those who are not; those who wear the turban and those who do not; those who cut their hair and those who do not (see Redbridge SACRE briefing paper 3: Sikh Appearance and Identity);
- ♦ how do the beliefs and values of Sikhs affect their actions? eg izzat (family honour); appearance and identity; intermarriage; social justice, following the law;

- ♦ what is the evidence for Sikhism in our locality?
- ♦ what is the significance of the ten Gurus for Sikhs? eg the historical Gurus; the Gurus as messengers; Guru Nanak; Guru Arjan and the Guru Granth Sahib; Guru Gobind Singh and the founding of the Khalsa; stories and their meaning;
- ♦ what kinds of issues are Sikhs concerned about today? eg living in a non-Sikh society; arranged marriages; equality;
- ♦ where do Sikhs get their strength from? eg the community and the gurdwara; langar; appearance and identity; beliefs about God; prayer and meditation; daily guidance from the Guru Granth Sahib; the Japji Sahib, the Mool Mantra;
- ♦ what is the significance of the Panjab for Sikhs? eg geographical location; Sikh history; Amritsar; Khalistan Movement;
- ♦ is being a Sikh an easy option? eg the challenges of living in a secular, consumerist society; the preoccupation with the outward rather than the inward; dress and appearance; and
- ♦ how do Sikhs relate to those of other faiths and none?

C2 Extended key questions related to the principal religious traditions: Key Stage 4

The following key questions are suggested as providing a basis for exploration and response into units of work suitable for key stage 4:

- ♦ Is life a journey?
issues of change in the human lifecycle
- ♦ What is worth celebrating?
issues concerning the value and purpose of celebration
- ♦ Does it matter whether it really happened?
issues concerning historicity in relation to belief
- ♦ What does it mean to be successful?
issues concerning wealth and responsibility
- ♦ Why be good?
issues concerning morality and doing good
- ♦ Are men and women equal?
issues concerning the role and status of men and women
- ♦ Is there life beyond death?
issues connected with death and belief in resurrection and reincarnation
- ♦ Whose world is it anyway?
issues concerning the environment
- ♦ But why?
issues concerning the existence of suffering
- ♦ Whose body is it anyway?
issues relating to alcohol and other drugs

- ♦ Who are we? Who are you?
issues concerning identity and prejudice
- ♦ What does it mean to be free?
the idea that service to others is the key to freedom
- ♦ Why this path? Why this road?
the life and beliefs of local, national or international person/s
- ♦ What's the message?
exploration of how the arts portray religious ideas
- ♦ Why bother?
exploration of the origin and purpose of a local, national or international charitable organisation/s
- ♦ Whose life is it anyway?
exploration of issues concerning dying and the taking of life
- ♦ Why should I?
exploration of issues concerning obedience to the law
- ♦ Is there a God?
exploration of issues concerning belief in God and non-belief
- ♦ What is truth?
issues of the meaning and claims of truth/s

D Glossary

It is recommended that teachers consult the SHAP Audio Glossary for key words:

<http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/glossary.html>

E Dealing with pupils' questions and disclosures

(Reprinted from Religious Education: Non-statutory guidance on RE, QCA 2000)

The nature of RE, particularly the second attainment target, learning from religion, may lead pupils to asking difficult questions or even making personal disclosures. Understandably, teachers can find such situations difficult to handle; it seems easy to say the wrong thing. This leads to a temptation to focus on the first attainment target, learning about religions, avoiding potentially difficult situations. However, this denies pupils access to those aspects of RE that are the most educationally rewarding.

Examples of difficult situations include pupils:

- ♦ asking questions to which the religions have no agreed answer, eg 'Was Jesus the son of God?';
- ♦ asking questions that raise difficult philosophical or theological issues, eg 'Why does a supposedly good God allow suffering?' (or more concrete and personal versions);
- ♦ asking what the teacher believes, eg 'Do you believe in God?';
- ♦ making comments or asking questions that reflect an offensive or unreflective approach to religion, eg 'Are you one of the God squad?';
- ♦ making disclosures that reveal personal faith commitments, eg 'I believe that the Qur'an is the absolute word of God';
- ♦ making disclosures that are personal, eg 'My grandma died yesterday';
- ♦ making inappropriate value judgements on the faith of other people, eg 'People who believe that are stupid!'

Such situations may be difficult for one or more reasons:

- ♦ they may cause upset or offence to other pupils;
- ♦ they may expose the pupil to upsetting comments;
- ♦ they may reveal misunderstandings that seem in need of correction;
- ♦ there may be no straightforward answer to the question;
- ♦ they may reveal an inability to cope with differences of opinion;
- ♦ they may be embarrassing;
- ♦ there may not be time to deal with them;
- ♦ the teacher may not have the training or knowledge needed to deal with them.

There are no 'off-the-shelf' ways of dealing with such classroom incidents. Teachers will need to use their professional judgement and sensitivity. The ethos of the school, and the contribution of RE to it, will be important in establishing the right climate for dealing with such questions and incidents. The following practical guidelines may be of help.

Practical guidelines

1. Encourage the use of 'owning and grounding' language such as 'in my opinion' or 'some Hindus would say'. This allows belief statements to be made in the classroom without everyone feeling they have to agree.
2. Treat the question or incident as a positive rather than negative event, wherever possible. Remember that it is the way the incident is dealt with and how the class response is managed that matters most.
3. Affirm the importance of the pupils' contribution, even if you don't agree with it, with phrases like 'I've wondered about that too, that is an excellent question', 'You're not the only one who doesn't know the answer to that.'
4. Help pupils to understand that diversity of opinion and the existence of unanswerable questions are aspects of life that we all have to learn to live with. Education, age or intelligence will not eliminate all of these aspects.
5. Allow for the possibility of a range of answers or opinions. For example, use 'most Christians would probably say ..., but some Muslims would think differently, saying ...'. Encourage an awareness of diversity without undermining the pupil's own beliefs.
6. Use the situation to open up rather than close down conversation or thinking. Encourage a 'let's explore this together' approach in which the teacher is a participant, not simply an expert.
7. Encourage further exploration by suggesting other people that pupils could ask, eg faith community leaders, or places where they might find help, eg resource centre. In particular, affirm the importance of people close to the pupil, such as their family, their faith community, their friends.
8. Correct factual misinformation, wherever possible, without confrontation. But always respect the right of the pupils, their families and the members of the communities to which they belong to hold their own beliefs.
9. In the case of personal disclosure, the prime need may be for comfort rather than abstract discussion of any concepts involved. With some pupils it may be possible to suggest a follow-up to the pupil's disclosure (eg personal tutor), but without 'fobbing-off' the importance of it. If this is not possible, set the class an activity that provides time to attend to the pupil or allows the pupil some personal space.
10. Throw questions back for further clarification with phrases like 'What do you think?', 'Can you clarify ...?', 'What would happen if ...?'. Aim to keep the pupil pondering, rather than giving closed answers that seem clear cut when the issues is anything but clear cut.

11. Be as honest as possible without being ruthless. For example, it does not help to tell a pupil that her granddad has gone to heaven if the teacher does not believe that, or if it would be offensive to the pupil. But a teacher could tell the pupil that many religious people believe that. In these circumstances a teacher should not normally challenge a pupil's belief. Keeping one's integrity with sensitivity is important.
12. Let a discussion develop if it is being taken seriously by the class. But have a quiet or reflective technique ready to provide a suitable close to the discussion, eg a chance for the pupils to make a private diary entry or to make a personal resolution based on the lesson.
13. Never intrude into a pupil's personal life. There should always be the freedom to remain silent in lessons where the discussion is intimate or deep. Teaching the whole class rather than small groups may reduce the risk of particular pupils being exposed to such intrusions.
14. Establish ground rules with the class for discussing controversial issues.
15. If a difficult issue arises, which is impossible to handle properly, return to it later when it can be dealt with in a more considered way.

Appendix F

Membership of the Redbridge Agreed Syllabus Conference

Chair of the conference

Cllr John Fairley-Churchill

Committee A:

Christian Denominations and Other Religions and Denominations

Mrs Claire Clinton: representing the non-conformist churches

Mr John Hewitt: representing the Roman Catholic community

Mrs Fiona Hulbert: representing the Jewish community

Mr B. Joshi: representing the Hindu community

Dr S. Kariyakarawana : representing the Buddhist community

Mrs Carol Khorsandyon: representing the Baha'i community

Mr Ian Morris: representing the non-conformist churches

Imam Haroon Rashid: representing the Muslim community

Mr H. Seehra: representing the Sikh community

Committee B:

The Church of England

Ms Lyn Hillier

Mr John Thurley

Mrs Angela Banwell

Committee C:

Associations representing teachers

Mrs Julia Diamond-Conway: Newbury Park Primary School

Mrs Carole Jordan: Ilford County High School

Ms Karen Van Coevorden: South Park Primary School and Vice Chair until April 2008

Mrs Sina Williams: Woodlands Infants School

Committee D:

The Authority:

Councillor F Maravala

Councillor Mustafa

Supporting officers:

Mrs. K. Davison: Clerk to SACRE

Mr. B. Gent: Advisory and inspection Service: until July 2008

Ms. L. Broadbent: LA Consultant for RE

Ms Frankie Chissim (coopted)

Mr Neil Poole (coopted)

Agreed Syllabus Review Group:

Gordon Beckett: Woodford County High School

Stacey Burman: formerly at Woodbridge High School

Claire Clinton: Secondary Consultant for Redbridge

Frankie Chissim: Consultant on Global Citizenship

Julia Diamond-Conway: Newbury Park Primary School

Joy Ferber: Woodlands Infants School

Gina Lester: Nightingale Primary School

Nicola Morris: Woodford Wells Primary School

Adele Rood: Seven Kings High School

Manisha Sharma: Gearies Infants School

Barry Smith: Park Hill Junior School

Karen Van Coevorden: South Park Primary School