

Education
Commission
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK



Archdiocese of Southwark Diocesan Policy for Religious Education July 2019

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Preamble to the Policy

The document has been developed by the Religious Education Advisory team and approved by the Diocesan Trustees. School leaders and governing bodies in Catholic schools, within the Archdiocese of Southwark, may use this policy as a basis for their own Religious Education policies. All policies and guidance are reviewed on a three-yearly cycle or earlier if necessary.

Introduction

The ultimate aim of Religious Education, in our Diocesan schools, is to situate Christ at the centre of all that we do. Jesus Christ is the absolute revelation of God. Through the Holy Spirit each of us, in the Communion of Christ's Church, has the means to know and to love God, our Father, by knowing and loving his Son, Jesus Christ.

"This is why religious education in our schools must be as rigorous as any other academic discipline: but it cannot, as it were, stop at the point of academic rigour. It is the working of the Holy Spirit that transforms knowledge into love; that moment of 'conversion' when the person encounters the risen Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. And this process, of course, has no limits in terms of the intellectual ability (or otherwise) of the individual student. One of the most beautiful aspects of personal faith is its capacity to bring together persons of all abilities." (from a homily given by Monsignor Matthew Dickens NBRIA Conference, April 2019)

Within the curriculum, classroom Religious Education's main purpose is to engage pupils in a systematic study of the mystery of Christ which we believe holds the fullness of the truth that God has revealed. It will also provide the basis for an openness to the 'seeds of the Word' that are to be found in other religions (cf *Redemptionis Missio* 56, *Nostra Aetate* 2).

Conference of Catholic Bishops of England and Wales (CCBEW) Requirements

The Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19) for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales 2012 (RECD) clearly states, the Bishops' Conference expectation that 10% of taught curriculum time is given to the teaching of Religious Education in each academic year from EYFS through to Yr11, and 5% for the post-16 phase. These time allocations do not include collective worship, assemblies or hymn practice.

Legal requirements

The law, School Standards and Framework Act 1998, requires all maintained schools:

- provide Religious Education for all pupils including those in the sixth form;
- recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education and Collective Worship.

In addition:

- Foundation governors in voluntary aided Catholic schools have a statutory responsibility to preserve and develop the religious character of their schools;
- Governors in Catholic academies give a written commitment to do the same.

Leadership of Religious Education

The governors and headteacher are responsible for ensuring that Religious Education has a high profile, and is taught as a core subject, within the curriculum of the Catholic school.

Each school/college must ensure:

- that there is a named person who is responsible for leading curriculum Religious Education;
- that the postholder is a practising Catholic. As the post of leader of Religious Education is a reserved post, the Education Commission must be invited to exercise advisory rights on behalf of the Archbishop in the appointment process;
 - in the secondary phase, an adviser from the Education Commission will support the school in the recruitment process and attend the interviews in an advisory capacity;
 - in the primary phase, it is expected that schools appoint a practising Catholic to the post, informing the Education Commission of the name of the postholder;
 - the appointment of a non-Catholic to the post of leader of Religious Education in any phase, must be discussed with the Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality, as the post holder may require an Exemption from the Archbishop. It must be noted that this option should only be used after all means of appointing a practising Catholic to the post have been exhausted;
- in all phases, that the leader of curriculum Religious Education should have parity in status and remuneration with the leaders of other core curriculum subjects within the school/college;
- that curriculum Religious Education is well resourced, both in regard to content and the continuing professional development of those teaching the subject;
- that there is regular and comprehensive monitoring of curriculum Religious Education which clearly demonstrates the impact the subject has on the school.

Curriculum Religious Education

Programmes of study must comply with the expectations of the RECD, and subsequent versions.

Primary Phase

- school governors and leaders are required to ensure that the curriculum content of taught Religious Education meets the requirements of the RECD as well as any additional requirements of the Local Ordinary;
- currently there are two recommended schemes of work, both of which meet the requirements:
 - *Come and See*, an online only resource, created and updated by the Catholic Project and available from Matthew James Publishing;
 - *The Way the Truth and the Life*, a book-based resource published by CTS;
 - school governors and leaders may choose to use an alternate programme or create their own. If this decision is made, they must provide a curriculum map, to the Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality, which clearly illustrates that the school is fully meeting the Diocesan requirements.

Secondary Phase:

- the diocese expects schools to design a key stage 3 programme of study that fulfils the requirements of the RECD. Such a programme of study could be based on the Catholic Project's "People of God: Called to Service" framework;
- at key stage 4, the school's choice of syllabus must reflect the Catholic nature of the school and the needs of the pupils. It is expected that all Catholic secondary schools will offer GCSE specification which has been approved by the Trustees of the Diocese;

- key stage 5 General Religious Education programmes should also be designed to meet the requirements of the RECD. Schools must give the Education Commission an overview of their programme of study.

Sacramental preparation and the Catholic School

- It is diocesan policy that sacramental preparation takes place in the parish. It is good practice for schools to liaise as closely as possible with the local parishes in order to ensure appropriate support and connections between parish sacramental preparation and school Religious Education programmes.

Teaching of Other Religions:

- the RECD contains an expectation that Catholic schools should teach about other religions in all phases from Early Years Foundation through to sixth form;
- it is expected that pupils in our Catholic schools learn about and from other faith traditions as this will help to prepare them for living as full members of our diverse society;
- Diocesan expectations:
 - in the primary phase: the minimum requirement is that other religions are to be taught for the equivalent of 2 weeks of Religious Education lessons, in each academic year;
 - in key stage 3, the expectation is that other religions are to be taught for the equivalent of 6 weeks of Religious Education lessons, in each academic year;
 - in key stage 4, GCSE, 25% of the specification taught is given over to a different a second religion;
 - in key stage 5 General Religious Education it is expected that teaching about other world faiths is included in the programme.

Planning, assessment and recording of Religious Education:

- the Catholic Education Service (CES) and the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA) regularly publish and update documents containing the age-related standard for Religious Education. In addition, the Education Commission produces support documents for the assessment of the subject;
- it is expected that the processes for monitoring pupil progress has the same rigour as those for the other core subjects. In all phases it is expected that planning for curriculum Religious Education follows the framework chosen by the school;
- the recommended schemes of work provide guidance through their published books and web-based resources.