

Diocese of Westminster

EDUCATION SERVICE

Diocesan Policy on Religious Education (2012)

The whole Catholic school is part of the Church's ministry to evangelise and catechise. Through the centuries, the Church has educated young people and adults as part of its life. The witness, by the staff and pupils, to belief in Jesus Christ and the Catholic way of life, is itself a teaching and learning experience.

In school, Religious Education is, in the first instance, education in the Catholic faith; pupils learn about the Catholic tradition and from it.

“Religious Education is central to the curriculum of the Catholic school and is at the heart of the philosophy of Catholic education. Religious Education has developed in a way that reflects the particular identity of our Catholic schools in England and Wales. It teaches about the faith in the context of a school which proclaims the Gospel, and invites the individual to respond to the message of Christ. As the individual responds to this invitation, growth in faith and knowledge helps the pupil to respond to the call to holiness and understand the fullness of what it is to be human. For some, then, Religious Education will also be received as evangelisation and for some, catechesis.”¹

Classroom Religious Education has its own content, methodology, assessment and culture. The broad areas it covers are God's self revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. It should be accorded the same status and taught with the same rigour as the core subjects of the National Curriculum. It is open to inspection and assessment by public examination and at Diocesan level . It is an important contributory factor to the passing on of the community's faith from one generation to the next.

It will be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject and requires 10% of the length of the taught week at each stage of education.

Classroom Religious Education has as its outcome:

“religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life”²

Accordingly, the following requirements apply to Religious Education in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Westminster:

1. Whole school Religious Education is to provide for a lived faith experience through worship, retreats, assemblies and action for social justice. The Religious Education Department contributes to this whole school direction.
2. Classroom Religious Education is to be resourced as a core subject and allocated 10% of teaching time at each Key Stages 1-4 and 5% at Sixth Form.
3. The classroom Religious Education curriculum is to be delivered in accordance with the general norms laid down by the Bishops' Conference: **Religious Education Curriculum Directory (3-19)** (2012); **Statement on Religious Education** (2000)

¹ Religious Education Curriculum Directory (Bishops' Conference, 2012), p.3.

² Religious Education Curriculum Directory (Bishops' Conference, 2012), p.6.

and any Diocesan guidelines.

4. Classroom Religious Education is to be assessed in accordance with the general norms laid down by the Bishops' Conference: **Levels of Attainment in Religious Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges** (2007).
5. Classroom Religious Education is to be inspected according to the current **Diocesan Inspection Framework**.

Diocesan policy relating to schemes of work and programmes of study encourages individual schools to utilise whichever resources best suit the needs of the children within their schools. The Diocese will support all Catholic schools in their delivery of the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and other norms of the Bishops' Conference and provides guidance in this regard. As a consequence, Diocesan resources are committed to providing in-service training and resources to support this process. Details of our current in service training courses, guidance related to the new Diocesan Inspection Framework and SEF and useful curriculum resources can be found on the Diocesan website by following the respective links as follows:

Curriculum Directory, Bishops' Statement and Levels of Attainment:

http://www.rcdow.org.uk/education/default_view.asp?parent_ref=231&library_ref=8&category_ref=251

In-service training:

<http://www.rcdow.org.uk/education/events/cpd2012.pdf>

Diocesan Inspection Framework and SEF

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/headteachers/inspection-self-evaluation/>

Curriculum Support:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/teachers/curriculum-resources/>

Contact :

Stephen C Horsman
Assistant Director of Education
020 7798 9192 or 07738 183830

stephenhorsman@rcdow.org.uk