

## **RE teaching survey- primary**

17 Responses:

2 infants' schools

4 junior schools

5 primary schools

1 Church of England primary

3 Catholic primary schools

1 secondary academy

1 secondary Catholic school

## **Provision**

RE is taught as a discrete subject by all respondents and also almost all schools covered elements of RE through other curriculum subjects, even though there is discrete provision. The most commonly cited links were PSHE, history, geography, and literacy, although, science, philosophy for children, art, design, ICT, expressive arts and circle time were also cited.

Discrete curriculum time was generally 10% of the timetable, or around an hour a week, though this did vary down to 30 minutes a week in some key stage 1. This is broadly in accordance with QCAD recommendations.

Teaching is often woven into the topics and assessed as part of understanding the world and personal development in early years or covered within topics in schemes such as The Edison curriculum or Discover schemes.

All respondents made the point that there are curricular links through other subjects and topics and this was a strong theme.

*"Our RE teaching is the golden thread that runs through all that we do"*

All respondents used assemblies to teach RE and in a small minority of schools this was included within the curriculum time specified. Assemblies all devoted some time to celebrating or educating about the key religious festivals associated with major world religions. However there was a clear predominant focus on Christianity as is required.

All respondents used assemblies to focus on religious, but also human values, drawing attention to the roles of these common values in other major religions.

All respondents considered that implicitly or explicitly their SMSC programme contributed to religious understanding through a focus on values, reflection and in many cases explored the similarities between cultures and faiths.

Just under half of respondents offered trips for pupils to places of worship. These were predominantly Church, but, Mosque, Synagogue and temples were also cited. A small number of respondents said that they invite faith representatives to speak on site, (other than faith schools). This included representatives from Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. Various faiths celebrated through assemblies and festivals, those names were Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh and Hindu.

Schools also participated in other key religion related events, such as Holocaust Memorial Day and the Edwardtide pilgrimage. School also had trips to places of religious significance through not worship, for example the Islamic Centre and the Holocaust

survivors centre Schools also used key cultural events from other cultures, such as Chinese New Year to explore both social and religious understanding of other cultures. A small number of schools had commissioned workshops in school to explore other religions with their pupils, for example Buddhist and Hinduism workshops.

### **Locally agreed syllabus**

All but one respondent was aware of the locally agreed syllabus and that it was in the process of revision. All respondents to some extent use or refer to the locally agreed syllabus, though there were a number of responses which indicated that some links provided no longer work and that resources are often out of date, and in general there was eager anticipation regarding the launch of the new syllabus.

Faith school respondents use their own locally agreed diocesan schools' syllabus and therefore did not use the locally agreed syllabus. Two respondents used the locally agreed syllabus alongside QCA schemes of work. Many schools were reviewing their curriculum in line with the new national curriculum. There was a slight element of frustration that the new syllabus had not been made available this academic year since it is the time when schools have been reviewing their entire curriculum planning.

### **Teaching and leading RE**

All respondents had someone leading on RE. This varied widely from the head teacher to other senior leaders, phase leaders, year leaders, the SMSC lead, subject coordinators and an HTLA.

About two thirds had involvement of a senior leader, whilst a third monitored this though the usual arrangements for non core subjects. Only two schools had someone with specialist training, but more often this was based on interest. One school used the specialist RE teacher to enable time for mentoring of pupil premium pupils by the class teachers.

In most schools, the RE lead was responsible for any training. Some reported no training for class teachers. There were very few sources of training or support mentioned, beyond the LA training and network events and the diocesan advisor/training. One school used a secondary RE specialist teacher as a source of advice.

### **Assessment**

All but one school assess pupils for their progress in RE, though several schools commented that this is 'informal'. This is by work scrutiny, observation of participation in lessons, and portfolios of work. Most respondents used levels from the national curriculum (pre 2014) moving to the 2014 age related expectations, or were already using these. Some used I can statements within the agreed syllabus or SIMs KPIs. A significant number of schools had not yet considered how they will assess RE without levels.

### **The place of RE**

Respondents were unanimous that they believe RE remains a key part of the curriculum. Many schools saw RE as part of their Strategy for promoting tolerance and understanding between cultures, though the approach and the coverage varied considerably.

A minority of schools indicated that the place of RE had increased as a result of the recent government and Ofsted focus on British values, including religious understanding and tolerance. It is seen as an academic subject, but also as a tool for community cohesion.

## **Secondary**

Responses were too few to draw conclusions

## **Provision**

Both schools provide discrete time for teaching RE at Key stages 3 and 4 so are in line with the national curriculum expectations. Both schools offer the opportunity for all pupils to take an accredited exam. 50 minutes - hour a week in Key stage 3 and 5x 50 minutes a fortnight in Key stage 4 / 2.5 hours a week for GCSE classes and an hour week within a combined RE/PSHE offer for core only pupils.

The faith school offer RE at key stage 5 this is 1x 50 minutes per fortnight.

Both school use assemblies to teach RE. Both schools make links between the wider curriculum and Re where appropriate and both make clear links to PSHE, SMSC and citizenship. Both schools offer pupils trips and wider opportunities, for example the Havering Youth Conference for RE 2014, Prayer space and Beliefs in Action and faith in action voluntary work group programmes.

## **Locally agreed syllabus**

The faith school uses the local diocesan syllabus 'The Way, The Truth, The Life'. The academy uses the Havering agreed syllabus 'Pathways' and they have been on the working party for the on-going revision.

## **Teaching and leading RE**

In both schools teachers and the RE lead are well qualified specialists

## **Assessment**

All pupils are assessed. In the faith school this is based on the Bishop's Conference levels, in the academy this will be based on GCSE grades going forwards. Pupils are assessed through regular teacher assessment and through periodic testing.

## **Examinations**

As might be expected take up is very high at the faith school at GCSE and A level is also offered. Most pupils sit accredited exams. These will not change as a result of new accountability measures.

At the academy, historically, pupils can study short or full course GCSE. This is the first year when RE examination has not been compulsory. 15 pupils are studying for GCSE in year 10. There is therefore evidential decline in numbers.

## **Conclusion**

It seems that RE continues to be a priority in most schools, though few indicated that they felt this to be increasingly significant.

**Schools were asked if there were many members of staff interested in joining the SACRE.**

Wybridge Junior School indicated an interest.