

Religious Education and Inclusion

The religious education envisaged in this syllabus is part of the Basic Curriculum required by law and therefore reinforces and complements the general teaching requirements¹ of the National Curriculum. Education in and about religious life is no different from other areas of the curriculum in requiring differentiation, acknowledging the different needs and capacities of pupils. The RE teacher no less than other teachers will seek to overcome any and every disability a pupil may have which might obstruct effective learning. Similarly the RE teacher no less than other teachers will seek to engage any and every ability a pupil may have which might enhance deeper learning. Some abilities are innate; others derive from the environment and family background of pupils e.g. fluency in two or more languages. The syllabus encourages close links between the school and the local community so the RE teacher is well placed to take advantage of those benefits which derive from the religious heritage and culture of the community. In these respects the RE syllabus seeks to be inclusive and for all.

Methodologically teachers are encouraged to deploy the full range of teaching strategies so long as the freedom and dignity of the pupils are respected. The diversity in teaching methods acknowledges the multiple nature of intelligence and the character of religious life in permeating every aspect of human culture.

All good education, including RE, challenges stereotypes and subverts prejudices. It will develop critical and reasoned judgment, including the capacity to be self-critical and the ability to appreciate the contributions of others. Central to religious life is the affirmation of the dignity of human life in which all participate. No one can be dismissed or 'written-off'. The fundamental commitment to education within religious life is to enhance and deepen that universal dignity.

The RE syllabus is designed to be of use and service to all pupils and communities in the city. However, it is also recognised that some parents may have deeply held convictions which may lead them to withdraw their children from RE and that they

¹ See Appendix xxx

have the right to do so in law. In such a case RE teachers and schools are encouraged to meet with parents to discuss their reservations and objections to explore whether their fears can be allayed or whether their objections can be met within the rubrics of the syllabus. No stigma is to be attached to parents, children or teachers who nevertheless choose to withdraw from RE; instead, other forms of teaching and learning might be offered to them by the school.