

RE AND COMMUNITY COHESION

RE for REal: “The religious landscape now includes religious traditions, informal religion and beliefs as well as non-religious world views “

Professor Adam Dinham

Modern Britain is diverse and shares a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities. RE has a central role in promoting respect, appreciation and understanding of people’s religions and beliefs, which is at the heart of our syllabus. Students are encouraged to understand themselves and others with different values, backgrounds and circumstances. The syllabus does not shy away from conflicts within and between religions; it enables pupils to look at and question various narratives and to explore collaboration and dialogue between people with contrasting views in faith and belief.

A vital part of RE is studying the damaging effects on human beings of racial stereotyping, xenophobia and the belittling of people’s beliefs and values. Some ideas are extremist and these can only be exposed and questioned when students are free to challenge them and develop the skills to do so. Any belief that incites hate, or breeds and justifies violence against a person or group, must be challenged. Extremists tend to ‘justify the use of force and violence over persuasion, prefer uniformity and dogma to diversity, stress collective goals over individual freedom, and give orders instead of using dialogue’.¹

A key learning outcome of this syllabus is helping pupils develop their understanding of similarities and differences within and between religions and belief. Pupils are encouraged to see religions not as separate, historical entities but as living, changing faiths that have important and ongoing dialogue with one another, in modern Britain, local communities and the world. The aim is to enable students to understand the place of religion and beliefs in different kinds of communities (school, local, wider, UK and global) and how the media presents these.

The syllabus helps to address such Big Questions as:

- **WHO AM I?**
- **WHO ARE WE?**
- **WHERE DO I AND WE BELONG?**
- **WHERE DO WE AGREE AND WHERE DO WE DIFFER?**

[Further information on challenging racism and stereotyping >>](#)

RE supports curriculum provision for understanding diversity and the changing religious and belief landscape in the following ways:

¹ RUTH MANNING & COURTNEY LA BAU ‘In and Out of Extremism’ (August 2015) Quilliam Foundation <https://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/in-and-out-of-extremism.pdf>

PRIMARY RE

School Community	Local Community	Wider Community	Community of Britain	Global Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •encourage children of different religions and beliefs, to share their views and experiences •develop a range of religion and belief visitors to enrich learning in RE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •visit local places of worship •invite appropriate visitors from local faith and belief communities to support both RE and Collective worship •explore the portrayal of religion and belief in the local media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •visit places of worship of national significance in your local area •create / utilize worship trails to visit different faith communities and see where they are similar and different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •develop an understanding of the variety of religions and beliefs in the UK and how these are lived out •consider the portrayal of religion and belief in the national media •develop an understanding of inter -religious dialogue and activity in the UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •explore the place and activities of religion and beliefs in other countries and how they influence cultures and lifestyles •reflect on the contribution of religion and beliefs to global life

SECONDARY RE

School Community	Local Community	Wider Community	Community of Britain	Global Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •encourage students of different faiths and beliefs to talk about their views and experiences •invite a range of religion and belief visitors to enrich RE learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •visit local places of worship •invite visitors from local faith and belief communities to support RE curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •visit places of national significance in your local area •interview a range of faith community members beyond the local community •develop projects on the role and place of religion and belief in the wider community •Identify where they agree and where they differ including specific emphases within a religious tradition and across religion and belief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •develop an understanding of the different faiths and beliefs systems in Britain (with KS3 focus to include Buddhism and Sikhism) and how these are lived out. •analyse the portrayal of religion in the media and explore stereotypes •learn about and from conflict and collaboration in religion, within and across traditions and belief including inter-religious dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •explore Christianity in the developing world •consider and compare moderate and extremist interpretations of religion and belief •study religious extremism in Europe, the USA and parts of the Middle East

Useful links

The Development of Religious Tolerance: Co-operative Board Games for Children and Adolescents Minna Lehtonen:

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/reinvention/archive/volume2issue2/lehtonen

Centre For Trust Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University:

www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/trust-peace-social-relations/