

GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNORS

The following information is based on the 2015 **DfE Governance Handbook**:
www.gov.uk/government/publications

The National Curriculum

The law says that the school curriculum should be balanced and broadly based, and should:

- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
- prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Religious Education

All state-funded schools must teach religious education (RE). Maintained schools without a religious character should follow their locally agreed syllabus.

Voluntary aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school, unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus.

Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character should follow the locally agreed syllabus, unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school.

RE is also compulsory in faith and non-faith academies as set out in their funding agreements.

Collective worship

All maintained schools must provide a daily act of collective worship for their pupils. In community schools and non-faith foundation schools, the collective worship must be of a 'wholly or mainly, broadly Christian character'. The headteacher is responsible for arranging this after consulting the board. In voluntary aided schools, voluntary controlled schools and foundation schools with a religious character, the governing board is responsible for arranging collective worship in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school after consulting the headteacher.

In some maintained schools without a religious character, the family backgrounds of some or all pupils may lead the headteacher and board to conclude that broadly Christian collective worship is not appropriate. The headteacher can apply to the local SACRE to have the broadly Christian requirement disapplied and replaced by collective worship broadly distinctive of another faith and should consult the board before doing so.

Academies without a religious character must also provide a daily act of collective worship by virtue of their funding agreement. This too, should be 'wholly or mainly' broadly Christian in character. An academy wishing to have the broadly Christian requirement disapplied and replaced by collective worship broadly distinctive of another faith should apply to the Secretary of State via the EFA.

Guidance for governors on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC)

An Ofsted inspection will evaluate the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Paragraph 133 on page 34 of the Ofsted inspection handbook says the spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

- Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for other people's faiths, feelings and values
- Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015/

Section 48 – Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

In voluntary and foundation schools and academies with a religious designation, the religious education, school character and collective worship are inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The overarching question is:

‘How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupil and adults to flourish?’

The SIAMS Schedule is based on the Church of England Vision for Education and the seven strands the inspectors are exploring are:

- Strand 1: Vision and leadership
- Strand 2: Impact of the school’s Christian vision on wisdom, knowledge and skills
- Strand 3: Impact of the school’s Christian vision on hope and aspiration
- Strand 4: Impact of the school’s Christian vision on community and living well together
- Strand 5: Impact of the school’s Christian vision on dignity & respect
- Strand 6: Impact of Collective Worship
- Strand 7: Quality of religious education

Further information can be found on the Diocese of Bath & Wells website:

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/siams-school-inspections/>

Although schools without a religious designation are not subject to a Section 48 SIAMS inspection, all governors might find the Collective Worship and RE grade descriptors and information on the diocesan webpage useful in fulfilling their monitoring role.

Religious Education checklist for governors and headteachers

The following questions might form the basis of a discussion between the headteacher, governors and those responsible for leading RE in a school or academy:

- Does the RE programme of study, including reference to the syllabus being followed, feature on the school website, as required by The School Information Regulations 2012?
- Is there a clear policy for RE, reviewed in line with other curriculum areas?
- How do standards of achievement in RE compare with those in other curriculum areas?
- Do all pupils make progress in their knowledge and understanding of the faiths and beliefs studied? How do you know?
- How are vulnerable groups of pupils, e.g those eligible for free school meals (FSM) or pupil premium (PP), achieving in RE?
- Are standards of teaching in RE regularly and effectively monitored?
- Is teaching engaging, building on previous knowledge and skills?
- How do you know teacher assessment is robust and having an impact?
- How do teachers demonstrate an awareness of the role of RE in promoting British Values e.g 'mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith'?
- Are those teaching RE suitably qualified and trained in the subject, and have access to effective Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?
- Is RE well led and effectively managed across the school?
- Is RE resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that means the school can fulfil its legal obligations and pupils can make best progress?
- Where appropriate, do pupils have the opportunity to take a full-course GCSE or A Level?
- What are pupils' attitudes to RE? Are they able to speak about religious ideas and faith? (religious and theological literacy)
- Is clear information provided to parents/carers on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw, for example, in the school prospectus, or on the school website?
- Are teachers aware they do not have to teach RE?

Additional questions suitable for a Church school or academy:

- Is there an appropriate weighting toward Christianity in the school's RE planning?
- To what extent does the school's RE syllabus reflect the National Society's Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education?
- How does RE contribute to the distinctively Christian values of the school?

A full list of grade descriptors for outstanding RE in a Church school or academy can be found in the Section 48 SIAMS Evaluation Schedule. Further information from the Diocese of Bath & Wells

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/siams-school-inspections/>

Collective Worship checklist for governors and headteachers

The following questions might form the basis of a discussion between the headteacher, governors and those responsible for leading collective worship in a school or academy.

- Does the school comply with legal requirements for collective worship?
- Is there a clear policy for collective worship, and is practice in the school consistent with it?
- Does the school have a clear structure of themes for worship across the school year?
- Is the quality of planning and delivery of collective worship monitored?
- How will the monitoring process be used to further develop collective worship?
- Do pupils participate and are their responses to worship positive?
- Is collective worship adequately resourced in terms of leaders, material, visual aids etc.?
- Is training provided for leaders of collective worship?
- Are the various environments and groupings for collective worship maximising opportunities for worship?
- Are there opportunities for reflection?
- Is the school's collective worship policy and programme published and updated on the school website?

Additional questions suitable for a Church school or academy:

- Does the collective worship in the school uphold the school's distinctive Christian ethos?
- How well does collective worship inspire and enhance the spiritual development of pupils and staff, of all faiths and of none?
- Does planning for collective worship give opportunity to celebrate the major Christian festivals?
- Are visitors (e.g clergy) invited to enhance the worship life of the school?
- Are there opportunities for prayer and reflection?

A full list of grade descriptors for outstanding collective worship in a Church school or academy can be found in the Section 48 SIAMS Evaluation Schedule. Further information from the Diocese of Bath & Wells

<http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/school-effectiveness/inspections/>