

Visits and visitors

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What did the Warwick Report say?

The report contained numerous references to visits and visitors, not only in the context of RE but also in serving the wider purposes of community cohesion, stating that, for example:

- facilitating meetings between their students and others through a variety of means, including electronic, is an important part of the RE teacher's role (p.168)
- when the pupils' own religion is the subject of study, then the pupils themselves and their experience can become a religious education resource – though schools develop this in different ways (pp.130–1)
- in secondary schools, books are not very popular as resources among many of the pupils. Instead, there is a general appreciation of more interactive, person-to-person approaches to teaching and learning whereby teachers, fellow students and occasional visitors are valued as resources (pp.161–2)
- young people particularly appreciate direct contact with difference in their learning rating highly opportunities to learn from others about their views and lives. This direct contact does not have to involve visits and visitors but can include peer discussion in the classroom (p.168)
- the use of visitors for RE is part of the practice in the majority of schools (p.213)
- as well as being the centre of the community, many of the case-study schools worked at a different level as a partner alongside other community players, these partnerships often having a religious or religiously motivated dimension (e.g. pupils from Muslim and Roman Catholic schools visiting each other's schools) (p.175)
- for 'non faith' as well as 'faith schools', the most significant partnerships in terms of working together in and for the community are often those with local churches (p.176)
- representatives of the main faith communities, who can speak about the faith traditions from the inside, appear to be an important resource for RE in both primary and secondary schools and are therefore valued highly by them (pp.178–9, 189–90)
- pupils find direct encounter with other religions through outside visits and visitors to the school (and also on video clips) particularly helpful in their understanding (p.213)
- the contributions to RE made by local faith communities could play a crucial role in the relevance of RE for community cohesion within the local context; but formal training and accreditation opportunities in this field could help to ensure the quality of such provision (p.217)
- school leaders and RE teachers should develop community partnerships between the school and local faith communities, particularly those with an orientation towards social action, so that pupils can learn about the role of religions in society and themselves engage in partnerships for the common good (p.219).