
A Religious Education Subject Leader's Toolkit

PRIMARY

 **NATRE**





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Note

This document has, with full permission, used and adapted some ideas and text from 'At Least 200 Tips for RE Subject Leaders' (Gloucestershire SACRE 2001) and 'Effective Subject Leadership' (York Diocese/RE Today Services 2013).



A vision of RE

THE RE CURRICULUM: WHAT ARE YOU TEACHING?

The first thing all subject leaders for RE need is a curriculum. The agreed syllabus or guidelines for RE are different all over the country as there is no national curriculum for RE. If you are a maintained school or voluntary controlled school your RE curriculum is the locally agreed syllabus written by your local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). If you are a voluntary aided faith school, you will receive guidelines from your denomination or sponsoring bodies. Many Church of England dioceses recommend the local Agreed Syllabus, although some require schools to follow Diocesan guidelines too. Academies and free schools may still use their local agreed syllabus, an Agreed Syllabus from another part of the country, or commission an RE curriculum to be written by an organisation such as RE Today. If you are an academy and have no RE curriculum, your priority is to get one!

For more details on RE in academies and free schools, search for 'Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools' on the NATRE website.

WHAT IS RE FOR?

Think about the fundamental purpose of RE: what do you think it is for? This will guide you in choosing *what* to teach as well as *how* to teach RE.

In this extract from the non-statutory *A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England* (REC 2013),* the purpose of the subject is defined. How far do you agree? How far does this reflect the purpose or aims of RE from your local syllabus or guidelines?

Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. In RE they learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. They learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully (p.11)

Can you create a short paragraph, no more than two or three sentences, that is the purpose of RE in your school? This is helpful to show pupils, teachers, governors and parents what the subject is about. Its purpose is not to create believers: it is an academic subject that enables enquiry into fundamental questions and consideration of how religions and worldviews address these questions. It is surprising how many misconceptions there are about RE. It is a subject for those who have no religious beliefs and for those with religious beliefs. A clear purpose for RE will show the relevance of RE within the curriculum of your school.

SHARING THIS VISION

Spend time discussing your ideas with teachers and other colleagues who deliver RE, and any interested parties, such as the governing body. Does everyone share your vision? Describe your shared vision of the purpose of RE when creating policy documents. If you are clear about the aim and purpose of RE in your school, it will help when doing long- and short-term planning: ask yourself 'Do these lessons/activities support our principal aim/purpose?' If not, don't do them!

ESTABLISHING YOUR AIMS

Identify *how* you intend to achieve your vision by articulating your shared aims. This extract from the non-statutory *Framework* describes what teaching should aim to achieve. How far do you and your colleagues agree?

* Page references cited in this document are to the REC's Summary Report, *A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England*, not the longer *A Review of Religious Education in England and Wales* (REC 2013) of which it formed a part and where the page numbering is slightly different.

