

Sources and Experiences in Religious Education

In order for pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the religions, faiths and worldviews they study, to appreciate the diversity and change within them, and to reflect and respond to their own and others' experiences and approaches to 'Big Questions' in light of what their learning, pupils should have access to a wide range of sources, experiences and resources.

By encountering people, literature, spaces and places, creative and expressive arts and other resources from a wide range of cultures, religions, faiths and traditions pupils can understand aspects of religions and worldviews from the perspective of the believers, without relying solely on the teachers' understanding or ability to explain.

The use of different media to build understanding and express meaning through a range of senses such as touch, hearing, seeing, smell and tasting, will lead to the curriculum being more accessible and inclusive of all learners, and to pupils using a broader spectrum of skills, styles and activities to engage with a wider range of sources, experiences and resources.

Pupils can further develop their analytical and literacy skills when interpreting, comparing, reflecting and responding to sources and resources across a range of media beyond written text, including artistic interpretations, artefacts, buildings and interaction or dialogue.

The sharing of understanding through experiences and dialogue with others not only supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, it also promotes the British Values of interfaith harmony and cooperation and the combatting of prejudice and discrimination.

Through encountering people, literature, creative and expressive arts and resources from a wide range of cultures, religions, faiths and traditions in order to learn about the Believing, Living and Thinking of others, pupils can appreciate and celebrate the diversity within the society in which they live. This will support them to value themselves and others, and develop the willingness to learn from others, even when others' views or beliefs are different from their own, and thus provide opportunities to promote "British Values" and support the moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

In particular, Hackney has a large Orthodox Jewish community, and a large Alevi population as well as a substantial non-religious population. In order to contribute positively to community cohesion and actively combat prejudice and discrimination, the RE curriculum in Hackney schools should develop pupil knowledge, understanding, appreciation, sensitivity and relationships with these groups through the exploration into their spiritual, moral, cultural beliefs and traditions.

Sources, Resources, and Experiences in the RE Curriculum should include:

- a range of written and spoken religious and non-religious sources (including texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy, worship and sacred texts) in a range of styles and genres different texts, including poetry, diaries, religious/sacred texts, and extended writing
- visits and trips relating to places of worship or with special meaning/relevance for specific belief systems and religions, and visits from representatives of these
- artefacts, items, material sources used within religions, faiths or worldviews, that have or are used to express, special or religious values or beliefs
- sources from Christianity, the other principal religions and worldviews represented in Britain and in the local community

All sources and resources must:

- be presented from the perspective of the believers
- not be used to promote, convert or urge a particular religion or belief
- treated in a manner that believers would not find offensive

Varied Learning Activities

Just as beliefs and values are practised, expressed and experienced in different ways, so too are the ways pupils learn. Effective Religious Education will require a range of teaching styles and approaches to support all pupils to develop their skills in building and communicating their knowledge and understanding, and to respond to “Big Questions” with clarity, sensitivity and respect by using a wide range of sources, resources and experiences - regardless of gender, age, background or beliefs.

In particular, a wide range of teaching strategies should be employed for the development of dialogue, communication and literacy in Religious Education, both for the analysis, comparison and evaluation of spoken and written texts, sources and experiences, and also to articulate their own and others’ responses to these. There is a multitude of discussion and dialogue building techniques and activities that could be used in the classroom, and teachers should adapt their teaching to incorporate a wide range of these.

Pupils will be encountering and analysing a wide range of sources, experiences and resources in different media - including artistic interpretations, artefacts, buildings and personal interaction - in order to build an understanding of the values, beliefs and meanings being experienced, and to express their responses through a range of senses such as touch, hearing, seeing, smell and tasting. A variety of pedagogical approaches will be needed to help pupils experience and respond with skill and sensitivity.