

Summary of the Ofsted Subject Research Review: Religious Education 2021

Introduction

The latest review draws on our education inspection framework (EIF) and other religious education (RE) literature to identify what contributes to high-quality Religious Education curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and systems in schools where we inspect Religious Education. Below are the key points which have been identified from the report, which highlight for Ofsted high quality Religious Education.

High Quality Religious Education in all Key Stages:

- Has a high quality curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners the knowledge they need to succeed in life.
- Considers knowledge that pupils build through the curriculum.
- Has high expectations of scholarship.
- Has well sequenced, substantive content.
- Captures the diversity, fluidity and complexity of worldviews.
- Uses illustrative or indicative representations that will enable pupils to build sophisticated concepts.
- Prepares pupils to engage in a complex multi-faith and multi-secular world.
- Does not require excessive content but does need to be sufficiently cumulative.
- Avoids generalisations and tackles misconceptions.
- Develops vocabulary.
- Prepares pupils with prior knowledge they need in order to think about and respond to the controversial issues in an informed way.
- Is not superficial.
- Builds forms of knowledge that give pupils the capacity to think about the status of the content.
- Educates pupils to respond to content in informed, intelligent and reflective ways.
- Helps pupils choose the right tool for the job by specifying that is/are the appropriate method(s) for a specific aspect of the curriculum.
- Draws on well-established scholarly processes.
- Helps pupils distinguish knowledge in the curriculum from 'everyday' knowledge, opinions and ideas.
- Recognises there can be different ways of knowing things.
- Ensures pupils are prepared to think in critical scholarly ways.
- Works so that pupils can recognise the type of specialist discourse they are engaging in.
- Has subject leaders who are precise in how they select content because some content contains richer potential for this.
- Builds pupils' awareness of their own assumptions and values
- Has precise, detailed and fruitful content.

- Has teachers who are aware of the pupils' experiences and assumptions, and awareness of the knowledge that pupils have or have not built up through the curriculum.
- Equips pupils with subject components, composites built over time, and the ability to recognise/acknowledge different modes of enquiry.
- Provides many of the components that enables pupils to develop interpersonal competencies.
- Should be taught by subject specialists.
- Has ambitious, subject specific end goals.
- Provides pupils with the ingredients for cultural and civic competencies.
- Has a clear connection between the 'ways of knowing' that pupils learn, the personal knowledge that pupils develop and the substantive content.
- Enables pupils to remember the intended curriculum in the long term.
- Comprises methods that are well suited to the full scope of the curriculum.
- Is clear about the objective of learning.
- Provides pupils with periodic and recurrent opportunities to encounter these concepts being taught.
- Ensures the pedagogy used leads to curriculum impact.
- Uses a variety of formative and summative assessment methods.
- Is informed by insights from cognitive science and subject specific research.
- Is clear about what is being assessed and why.
- Does not misuse GCSE assessment methods to identify curriculum progress at KS3.
- Is clear about what it means to 'get better' at Religious Studies.
- Has sufficient curriculum time and is taught by well qualified professionals who enjoy high quality CPD.

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