

NEW GUIDANCE FOR PUBLISHERS

INTRODUCTION

In May 2010 the Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC) was commissioned by the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCSF) to update and extend its *Guidance to Publishers* on book resources in Religious Education (RE).

The guidance draws closely on the findings of the University of Warwick research report on *Materials used to Teach about World Religions in Schools in England* (The Warwick Report).

For those interested in further reading, the full text of the report can be found at:
<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-RR197&>

Why is the guidance being revised?

Since the publication of the REC's original guidance ten years ago, there have been many developments in relation to RE, which should be reflected in the resources available to support pupils' learning. For example:

- the detailed examination of resources in the Warwick Report
- the heightened political profile of religion in the modern world
- increased risks of stereotyping and prejudice
- many new initiatives in the wider contexts of curriculum and assessment, which impinge on RE.

The purpose of this guidance

The purpose of this document is to offer guidance to publishers of book resources which will:

- help authors navigate the complexities of the subject and avoid misrepresentation and offence
- encourage adequate research and fact-checking.

The guidance is also intended to assist in the provision of well resourced, good quality Religious Education through improved:

- accurate representations of religious beliefs and practices
- reflection of the complex diversity within religions
- awareness of sensitivities and the potential for causing offence
- use of insider contributions (members of the religion or tradition) to writing and checking.

REPRESENTING RELIGIONS AND BELIEFS IN TEXT

This section deals with some of the most complex and sensitive issues faced by publishers of book materials.

Priorities

On the basis of the Warwick findings, book resources should show religions to be:

- Diverse***
 - Accurately depicting each religion as diverse in terms of denominations, schools or movements.
 - Including qualifying statements about belief and practice using the qualifier 'some' or 'many' to recognize the variations of individual practices and interpretations.
 - Reflecting the cultural diversity and international character of religions.
- Transformative***
 - Recognising the power of religions and beliefs to change people's lives.
 - Recognising the power of religion and beliefs in society.
- Contemporary***
 - Portraying religions as active, relevant and contemporary with contributions to make to present society.
- In relationship***
 - Emphasizing the relationships between religions and beliefs, and between people of different religious and non-religious traditions.
 - Treating with respect and sensitivity religions and beliefs which are mentioned incidentally and are not the focus of the book.
 - Being aware of material regarding one religion which might be offensive to people of another (e.g. a book on Christianity ignoring the Jewish origins of the Old Testament).

Principles

In order to achieve these priorities, publishers should ensure that the following principles are adhered to when representing religions and beliefs in book resources:

- Accuracy:***
 - Avoiding spelling, grammatical mistakes and incorrect captions to pictures.
 - Including sufficient information to avoid misrepresenting a religion.
- Balance:***
 - Presenting a balanced picture of religions and beliefs including practice and belief, moral values and identity, and aspects of culture.

- Authenticity:***
 - Presenting a religion through its own perspective rather than through the lens of another religion or culture. In particular avoid using Christianity and Western philosophy as models for presenting all religions and beliefs.
- Depth:***
 - Presenting the meaning and significance of religions and beliefs in the lives of their followers: stimulating and challenging learning by presenting what being a follower and member of a religion entails and the complexities of religious traditions.
- Fairness:***
 - Giving all religions equal time and attention and avoiding portraying one as in any way more valid than the others. This is particularly an issue with books that cover more than one religion.

Personnel

The following practices will help to ensure that the qualities and principles above are achieved

- Authorship***
 - Employing authors with comprehensive knowledge of the relevant religion(s) and who keep up to date with scholarship or practice in the field.
- Consultation***
 - Where such authors are not used, consulting with experts and adherents of the religion in question at the planning stage.
 - Involving teachers and other RE professionals in the development of new materials.
- Proof reading***
 - Meticulous proof reading by experts in the field with particular attention to acceptable spelling of religion-specific terms.
 - Using the QCDA glossary of terms for consistency, giving alternative translations/transliterations only where necessary. See: <http://www.mmiweb.org.uk/publications/re/glossary.pdf>

ISSUES RELATED TO SPECIFIC RELIGIONS

The Warwick report identified some issues as being of particular to certain religions. Writers and publishers should pay particular attention to:

Buddhism

- Balance**
- Providing a balanced depiction between the distinctive perspectives and experiences of Buddhism in the Far East and indigenous British Buddhist communities.

Christianity

- Assumptions**
- Recognising that pupils using the book come from a wide range of religious and non-religious backgrounds.
- Coherence and depth**
- Engaging with the theological core of the Christian faith.
- Diversity**
- Portraying Christianity as a multicultural religion, not just Western.
 - Giving greater emphasis to the Orthodox and Reformed Churches as contemporary traditions.

Hinduism

- Accuracy**
- Taking care to present the details of Hindu beliefs clearly and accurately.
 - Conveying the internal diversity of Hinduism.

Islam

- Public image**
- Presenting a rich and positive picture of Islam as a living religion.
 - Presenting Islam as a religion with a long tradition in British society.
 - Reflecting the place of Islam in the wider world.
- Challenge**
- Providing challenging opportunities for pupils to engage with Islam in depth.

Judaism

- Post-Biblical Judaism**
- Engaging with the long tradition of Jewish thought over the last 2000 years.
 - Focusing on contemporary Jewish teachings, particularly in relation to religious ideas studied at KS4 and in the 6th form.

Sikhism

- Depth**
- Going beyond description of externals to the inner significance of Sikhism.
- Impact**
- Conveying Sikhism's power for transforming the lives of individuals.
 - Clarifying Sikhism's contribution to wider society.

PRESENTATION ISSUES IN PUBLICATIONS

Books should be attractive and appealing, taking account of the age group for which they are intended. This may be achieved by offering a variety of source materials with which pupils might engage, and by:

Text

- Font**
- Making the size and style of text appropriate to the ages of the proposed readers.
 - Attending to density of text and size of font.
- Prose**
- Breaking up prose by the use of headings, sub-headings and bullet points.
 - Using diagrams to summarise or present information and support learning.
 - Using colour to break up the text.
- Key words**
- Highlighting key words for each section of text.
 - Correct explanation of difficult words.
 - Cross-referencing to a glossary.
- Quotations**
- Including quotations from a variety of texts including religious, historical, social and contemporary, and from both primary and secondary sources. All sources should be clearly identified.
- Cross-curricular links**
- Identifying links with other subjects and dimensions in the curriculum (such as community cohesion).

Illustrations

Illustrations should enhance the educational value of a book by:

- Quality**
- Ensuring that photographs, reproductions, diagrams and other images are clear and of high quality.
- Captions**
- Including accurate and relevant captions.
 - Giving suitable information to explain pictures.

Stimulus

- Serving a purpose other than decoration. They should provide evidence on which pupils can draw conclusions, make comparisons and reflect on significance.

Sensitivities

- Taking account of religious sensitivities over the use of imagery (especially in Judaism and Islam).
- Ensuring that illustrations reflect the diversity of religions.
- Being sensitive to issues of colour and gender.
- Reflecting the global dimension of religions and beliefs.

Colour

- The use of full colour, as this was found to increase the interest in and accessibility to the book for all ability levels.

SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING IN TEXT BOOKS

The Warwick report discussed the contribution of books to pupils' learning.

Activities

Secondary sources were more likely than primary to include activities for pupils. Several characteristics distinguished the quality of activities in books:

Level of challenge

Devising tasks that offer variety, interest, an appropriate level of challenge and opportunities for pupils to use their imagination. The best books **include** activities that require:

- problem solving
- decision making
- create hypotheses
- conclusions based on evidence
- pupils to use other resources in addition to the book

and **avoid**:

- comprehension exercises
- copying
- cloze
- word search
- drawing
- matching sentences

Use of skills

- Including tasks which help pupils apply and develop a wide range of skills, such as: evaluating, analysing, explaining, reflecting, reasoning, synthesising, and empathy.
- Using thinking skills methods, encouraging speaking and listening by drawing on literacy skills, developing concepts and providing opportunities for creative expression.

Consideration for learning styles

- Encouraging different forms of thinking and learning, taking into account higher order and personal learning and thinking skills.

Relevance

- Making points of contact with the reader e.g. through the use of real children's lives and contemporary issues that pupils can relate to.

Use of attainment targets and levels

- Taking account of the levels of attainment and recognising the wide range of abilities, especially at KS3 and KS4.
- Giving equal weight to activities that relate to Attainment Target 1 (AT1), and Attainment Target 2 (AT2).
- Allowing for achievement at levels 6 and above.

Assessment

Books which included assessment tasks were seen as particularly useful preparations for GCSE:

- Clarification of criteria**
 - Making assessment criteria clear so that pupils know how their responses will be assessed.
- Meeting different needs**
 - Giving alternative tasks for those with special needs, including those who are gifted and talented.

ISSUES FOR SPECIFIC KEY STAGES

The Warwick report identified specific issues relating to teaching and learning materials at different key stages.

Primary

- Pupils**
 - Primary school pupils preferred religious story books to books which gave information about religions and religious lives.
 - Books were given a higher value as learning tools by pupils at primary schools, where there was a preference for story books over information books.
- Priorities**
 - The highest priorities in teaching religious education in the primary school were found to be promoting good personal and social values, promoting moral living and spiritual development and helping develop good citizens.
- Teachers**
 - Many primary school teachers have little or no confidence in how to deliver RE. They need resources to give them knowledge of religions and beliefs and understanding of the subject.
- Criteria**
 - Cost is the main factor influencing teachers' choice of materials at primary level.

Secondary

- Pupils**
 - Learning from books was not generally popular with secondary pupils, many of whom preferred learning from visual and electronic materials.
 - Many pupils found RE books dull or too challenging.
 - Some pupils were critical of the way in which their religion was portrayed in RE books.
- Priorities**
 - The high priorities in teaching religious education in the secondary school were found to be:

- reflecting on ultimate questions
- thinking critically about religion
- combating religious discrimination
- developing a positive attitude toward religion.

Teachers

- Non-specialists teaching RE needed resources to help them develop their knowledge of the curriculum.
- Specialists were more likely to create their own resource packs from a range of materials.

Criteria

The two main factors influencing the choice of books were:

- the individual teacher's own personal and professional judgement
- recommendation by the examinations board.

CHECKLIST FOR PUBLISHERS

The following questions may be used by authors, consultants and publishers as a summary guide to producing high quality RE books for schools:

Questions for authors and consultants

- Is the representation of the religion(s):
 - accurate
 - coherent
 - comprehensive
 - authentic
- Has the diversity within the religion(s) been clearly explained?
- Does the book convey a real sense of the deeper significance and power of religion in the life of the believer?
- Does the book present the religion(s) as living and contemporary with contributions to make to present-day society?
- Does the book offer sufficient depth and challenge for the readership?
- Does the book deal with ecumenical/intra and inter-faith issues?
- In pitching the book for a particular age group, does it take account of the attainment targets and level descriptions in the Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education (NSNF)?
- Do learning activities in the book take account of:
 - pupils' expected abilities
 - different learning styles
 - skills development?
- Does the book supply examples from religions of communal living, positive social involvement and collaborative action between different faith communities?
- Does the book offer an inclusive representation of faith community members e.g. gender, ethnicity, disability?

Questions for editors

- Do authors and consultants have the necessary knowledge, first hand experience of the religion and relevant educational experience?
- Have all possible steps been taken to ensure:
 - accuracy
 - balance
 - authenticity?
- Is the text set out attractively so as to engage pupils, taking account of font, key words, colour, diagrams and font size?
- Does the book include high quality, contemporary, colour visuals?
- Do visuals take account of religious and cultural sensitivities?
- Are illustrations presented as source materials to inspire reflection and thinking?

THE LAW AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Legal requirements

The law requires that:

- All pupils in maintained schools should be taught RE.
- Every local authority must adopt an agreed syllabus, which must be reviewed every five years (schools with a religious character are not obliged to teach from an agreed syllabus).
- Every agreed syllabus should "*reflect the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, while taking account of teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain*" (Education Act 1996).
- Clarification on the legal requirements and the latest government guidance on RE can be found at: www.education.gov.uk.

The curriculum and assessment

- Agreed syllabuses vary in their aims and content, sometimes reflecting the range of beliefs found in the local community.
- There is greater commonality between syllabuses now than at any previous time. This is because many of them draw extensively on the Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education (NSNF) (QCA 2004). This is an important document, with which all writers of RE books should be familiar.
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/QCA-04-1336.pdf>
- The NSNF includes two attainment targets for RE: 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'. Both attainment targets include level descriptions. These are used widely by teachers to guide assessment criteria, although some agreed syllabuses and other organisations, such as the Catholic Church, publish their own version of the attainment targets. Publishers and writers should be aware that the level descriptions reflect the standards at which pupils should be working

at different ages and should ensure that any tasks set for pupils enable them to reach these standards.

- QCDA and ACCAC in Wales have published national guidance on RE. Publishers and writers should have up to date information about the most recent guidance. Ofsted also publishes papers on RE, which are important sources of information about the current strengths and weaknesses in the subject. See:
<http://old.accac.org.uk>
www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications
- There are numerous websites offering support for RE. Two are particularly important because they provide gateways to many other sites:
www.religiouseducationcouncil.org
www.reonline.org.uk

Finally, these are changing times for primary education in general and perhaps therefore for RE in particular too. Any forthcoming publications will need to take careful account of any new legislation or guidance which emerges under the leadership of a fresh and potentially, very different government. The possible implications of this change of regime should not be underestimated, and editors and publishers will wish to be mindful of what it might mean for them and for their work.

WHO CAN AUTHORS AND EDITORS CONSULT?

For resources to meet the kinds of standards this guidance has been suggesting, authors' and editors' contact with informed members of faith communities and those holding other worldviews, with those engaged in the academic study of religions and beliefs, and with those who can offer professional advice about religious education, is important. Ideally such consultation should be an ongoing process which begins with the proposal and planning for a new book or series and continues to the final proofreading.

Identifying people who can be of assistance is not always easy; for example, within each faith group there is diversity, and it is important to find consultants who can address this and who are sensitive to those within their faith whose views they may not share. Where faith groups offer an education service, this will often be helpful in ensuring such awareness as well as recognising some of the expectations of religious education in schools.

The suggested list of initial contacts provided below is drawn from a longer list of the member bodies of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk>); a brief description of each group can be found on the REC website. These contacts should be able to respond to requests for contact with faith members; to provide accurate information and indicate suitable sources, and suggest consultants and readers of texts who are sensitive to the representation of faiths and to the requirements of RE in schools.

Religions and beliefs organisations

Baha'is

National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of the United Kingdom, 27 Rutland Gate, London, SW71PD	Tel: 020 7584 2566 Email: opi@bahai.org.uk Web: http://www.bahai.org.uk
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Buddhists

The Buddhist Society	Tel: 020 7834 5858 Email: info@thebuddhistsociety.org.uk Web: http://www.thebuddhistsociety.org
The Clear Vision Trust	Tel: 0161 839 4815 Email: education@clear-vision.org Web: http://www.clear-vision.org

Christians

Details of many of the main groupings of churches in the UK and links to them can be found at <http://www.ctbi.org.uk>, the website of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Church of England Education Division	Tel: 020 7898 1501 Web: http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/education
<i>See also:</i> The National Society for Promoting Religious Education	Tel: 020 7898 1518 Email: info@natsoc.c-of-e.org.uk Web: http://www.natsoc.org.uk
Church in Wales, Division for Education	Tel: 029 2034 8200 Web: http://www.churchinwales.org.uk
Catholic Education Service for England & Wales	Tel: 020 7901 1900 Email: general@cesew.org.uk Web: http://www.cesew.org.uk
Free Church Education Unit	Tel: 020 7529 8145 Email: education@cte.org.uk Web: www.freechurcheducation.org.uk
Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches	Tel: 020 7274 5589

Hindus

ISKCON Educational Services	Tel: 01865 304309 Email: ies@pambho.net Web: http://www.ies.iskcon.com
NCHT - The National Council of Hindu temples (UK)	Tel: 0121 552 3549 Web: http://www.nchtuk.org
Hindu Academy	Tel: 020 8902 0840 Email: hindu@btinternet.com Web: http://www.hinduacademy.org/
Hindu Council UK	Email: admin@hinducounciluk.org Web: http://www.hinducounciluk.org

Humanists

British Humanist Association 1 Gower Street London WC1E 6HD	Tel: 020 7079 3580 Email: see form on website Web: www.humanism.org.uk
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Jains

Institute of Jainology Unit 18, Silicon Business Centre 28 Wadsworth Road, Perivale Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 7JZ	Tel: 0208 997 2300 Email: info@jainology.org Web: http://www.jainology.org
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Jews

The Board of Deputies of British Jews	Tel: 0207543 5421 Email: education@bod.org.uk Web: http://www.boardofdeputies.org.uk
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For Liberal and Reform Judaism:

Leo Baeck College Department of Education and Professional Development	Tel: 020 8349 5620 Email: admin@lb.ac.uk Web: http://www.lbc.ac.uk
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Muslims

Al-Khoei Foundation	Tel: 020 7372 4049 Email: comments@al-khoei.org Web: http://www.al-khoei.org/
The Islamic Cultural Centre & The Central London Mosque	Tel: 020 7724 3363 020 7725 2213/2152 Email: info@iccuk.org Web: http://www.iccuk.org
The Muslim Council of Britain	Tel: 0845 26 26 786 Email: admin@mcb.org.uk Web: http://www.mcb.org.uk
The Muslim Educational Trust	Tel: 020 7272 8502 Web: http://www.muslim-ed-trust.org.uk

Sikhs

British Sikh Education Council	Tel: 020 8540 4148 Email: sikhmessenger@aol.com
British Sikh Consultative Council	Email: jasdev@bscf.org Web: http://www.bscf.org
Network of Sikh Organisations UK	Tel: 0208 544 8037 Email: sikhmessenger@aol.com Web: http://www.nsouk.org
Sikh Education Council of the UK	Tel: 07870 138 616 Web: http://www.thesikhway.com

Zoroastrians

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe Zoroastrian Centre for Europe 440 Alexandra Avenue, Harrow Middlesex, HA2 9TL	Tel: 020 8866 0765 Email: malcolm_deboo@yahoo.co.uk Web: http://www.ztfe.com
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PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED WITH RELIGIONS AND BELIEFS and EDUCATION

AREAIC The Association of RE Inspectors Advisors and Consultants	Web: http://www.arei.ac.org.uk
AULRE Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education (UK)	Email: chair@aulre.org.uk Web: http://www.aulre.org.uk
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	Tel: 0121 472 4242 Email: ceo@christianeducation.org.uk Web: http://christianeducation.org.uk
NATRE The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education	Tel: 0121 472 4242 Email: exec@natre.org.uk Web: http://www.natre.org.uk
NASACRE National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE	Web: http://www.nasacre.org.uk
SHAP The Shap Working Party on Education in Religions	Tel: 020 7898 1494 Web: http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk
Wales:	

Welsh Association of SACREs	Tel: 01633 411919
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OTHER ORGANISATIONS

<i>Interfaith issues:</i> The Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom	Tel: 020 7931 7766 Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk Web: http://www.interfaith.org.uk
The Three Faiths Forum [Concerned with <i>Christianity, Islam</i> <i>Judaism</i>]	Tel: 0207 482 9549 Email: info@threefaithsforum.org.uk Web: http://www.threefaithsforum.org.uk