



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

**RE Update
April 2008**

Introduction

Welcome to the RE update from the QCA for Spring 2008. The purpose of this update is to keep in touch with RE partner organisations. This update lets organisations and individuals in the RE community know about the ways in which the QCA is supporting RE as part of the whole curriculum. The update has links to several web pages, so it can be used electronically and hosted on the websites of RE organisations, as appropriate.

1. Rose Review of the primary curriculum

As part of the Children's Plan published in December 2007 (see) there will be a review of the primary curriculum starting this year, with first teaching in September 2011. The QCA will support Sir Jim Rose in evidence-gathering, writing programmes of study and managing the consultation. The intention is to take the national framework for RE into the new primary curriculum on a non-statutory basis, as happened in the secondary curriculum review. A newly formed group of consultants, representing the various professional RE associations and all the faith/belief communities, will soon begin work on this process.

The key relevant documents are:

Executive Summary of the Children's Plan:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/>

Sir Jim Rose's remit to work with the QCA on the primary review:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1537>

Call for evidence on the primary review:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Primary%20Review%20Document%20v2.doc>

2. RE and Diplomas

QCA has submitted nominations to the DCSF's development group on the Humanities diploma. The names include four RE specialists. RE will be included in this diploma. There is still a need to work out ways in which spiritual/moral development opportunities can be created in the full range of other diplomas.

3. New QCA documents

The following documents are new on the QCA website:

New SACRE reporting format for annual reports

http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_15623.aspx

Guidance for agreed syllabus conferences on making effective use of the non-statutory national framework

http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_15608.aspx

If the documents cannot be found using this URL, the best thing to do is to use the internal search engine and simply type in RE. The five top hits will include working with SACREs, where both the above documents can be found.

The SACRE self-evaluation document will migrate from the Ofsted site to the QCA site later this year.

The 2008 analysis of SACRE annual reports will focus specifically on the contribution and capacity of SACREs to promote community cohesion.

4. Pedagogy in RE

This year QCA will work with Ofsted and other bodies to focus on pedagogical issues in RE. There now exists an opportunity to explore issues in planning and teaching, and to engage in national debate about the nature of good pedagogy in RE. The raw material for this debate comes from several sources: the Ofsted long report (*Making Sense of Religion*, 2007); Mary Hayward's report for Warwick University (*The Teaching of Christianity at KS3*, 2007); the Religious Education Council's commission report (2007); and the work of more than 30 regional support advisers to give training on RE in the new secondary curriculum.

This amounts to a considerable wealth of data on which to build an awareness of good pedagogy in RE. QCA and Ofsted intend to work together on two conferences in 2008. The first event will be for the regional support advisers to reflect on their work. The second will invite academics in RE to sift evidence on pedagogy and to move the debate forward. The purpose of these events is to refresh thinking and to create opportunities

for RE to improve and align itself creatively with the concept-based and skill-based approaches taken in the rest of the curriculum.

5. New GCSE Religious Studies criteria

The new GCSE criteria for Religious Studies reflect the non-statutory national framework by creating two evenly balanced outcomes corresponding to 'learning about' and 'learning from', and by encouraging the use of the full range of concepts, skills and content including religions and beliefs. Awarding bodies are submitting their specifications. First teaching cohorts will start in September 2009, with first examinations for short course in 2010 and for full course in 2011.

6. Spiritual and moral development across the curriculum

The case studies and accompanying commentary on spiritual and moral development are presently in editing stage and will appear on the QCA website soon.

7. QCA participation in the RE action plan and update of Circular 1/94

QCA will be supporting the steering group and writing group to draw up proposals to update the RE and SACRE elements of Circular 1/94. The process will be coordinated by the Religious Education Council in partnership with the DCSF.