



FOREWORD

Assessment in Religious Education has often been a contentious issue. Those who oppose it will argue that we cannot give grades or levels to the faith development of the pupils. That is indeed true – but that is not what assessment in Religious Education is about.

The purpose of assessment is to make sure that the Religious Education we are offering is really education and really religious. Education is about leading a person on to a greater appreciation of what they are being exposed to. So we need to assess that the pupils are making progress in this area of study as we would in any other. Then we need to ensure that this quality education is being assessed in relation to religious matters and not simply being used as another way of measuring their skills in English or art or whatever. The outcomes of assessment should then inform our approach to teaching and learning in the future.

This Assessment Pack will, I hope, be a great help to schools in developing further whatever systems are already in place for the assessment of Religious Education. It is complementary to the *REvision 2000* scheme but has the advantage that it is based on nationally agreed Levels of Attainment.

I am grateful to the Beacon Schools who have funded this project, the members of the Working Party, their schools for releasing them, and the schools and teachers who piloted the materials. A special word of thanks goes to Anne Darby and Margaret Doyle for the way they have overseen this project and brought this resource together.

May all the hard work that this pack represents bear fruit in raising still further the high quality of Religious Education in our schools.

Rev Michael Cooke
Director of Religious Education
July 2005

INTRODUCTION

Due to the co-operation and hard work of a group of pilot schools and a small working party funded by Beacon Schools this Assessment Pack has been started. As with any other area of the curriculum there will be ongoing developments in Religious Education; this ring-binder format will allow for further materials to be added or amendments made as and when appropriate.

The pack will allow each school to decide how best to use the National Levels of Attainment as part of the assessment process in evaluating the effectiveness of its provision for Religious Education.

The pilot schools listed below used the assessment activities generated by the working party for each half – term during the academic year 2003-4. The samples of children's work are used with the permission of the participating schools.

This project was partly funded by the Beacon Schools listed below:

- St. Joseph's R.C. Junior School, Reddish, Stockport.
- St. Mary and St. Joseph R.C.P. School, Blackburn
- St. Michael's R.C.P. School, Whitefield
- St. Michael and St. John R.C.P. School, Clitheroe
- St. Teresa's R.C.P. School, Little Lever, Bolton

Members of the Working Party:

- Julia Bramhall, St. Joseph's Junior School, Stockport
- Anne Darby, Religious Education Centre
- Margaret Doyle, Religious Education Centre
- Norah Johnson, St. Brigid's, Manchester
- Kath Marriot, Sacred Heart, Colne
- Clare Martin, St. Wulstan's, Great Harwood
- Peter Mooney, St. Patrick's, Rochdale
- Marie - Christine Whalley, St. Wulstan's, Great Harwood
- Jenni Willis, St. Teresa's, Little Lever

Following the consultation with the pilot schools the Working Party gained the following members :

- Maggie Brennan, St. Veronica's, Helmshore.
- David Brown, St. Joseph's Junior School, Stockport
- Margaret Schofield, St. Joseph's, Heywood.
- Vicky Gorst – Smith, St. Peter and St. Paul, Bolton.

Our gratitude goes out to the original pilot schools that sent in samples of children's work with teacher assessments.

These are as follows:

- St. Edward's, Darwen
- St. Gabriel's, Castleton, Rochdale
- St. Joseph's Infant School, Reddish, Stockport
- St. Joseph's Junior School, Reddish, Stockport
- St. Veronica's, Helmshore
- St. Thomas More, Middleton
- St. Wilfrid's, Longridge
- S.S. Peter & Paul, Bolton
- St. Patrick's, Rochdale
- S.S. Joseph & Bede, Bury
- Alice Ingham, Rochdale
- S.S. Osmund & Andrew, Bolton
- Mount Carmel, Blackley
- St. Mary's, Eccles
- St. Joseph's, Heywood
- St. Boniface, Salford
- Cathedral School of S.S. Peter & John, Salford
- St. Philip's, Salford
- St. Joseph's, Todmorden
- Holy Family, Rochdale
- Sacred Heart, Rochdale
- St. Vincent's, Rochdale
- St. Patrick's, Oldham
- Sacred Heart, Westhoughton
- St. Wulstan's, Great Harwood
- St. Chad's, Cheetham Hill, Manchester

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Following the publication in May 2000 of the statement on Religious Education in Catholic Schools (appendix 1) from the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, the Diocese sought to address the status of Religious Education in our schools. In the same year the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA) published a National Framework "Levels of Attainment in Religious Education" (2000) which raised awareness of the criteria required to fulfil the expressed aims of Curriculum Religious Education and how to approach planning for assessment. A small group of advisers from other dioceses began to pilot the Levels of Attainment in a few schools in the academic year 2000 – 2001. The fruits of their labour were used as a basis for INSET for all Religious Education Advisers in 2001 – 2002, attended by the advisers in the Salford Diocese. In response to this in Spring 2003 the Religious Education Advisers brought together a Salford Diocesan working party to work on the National Levels in relation to *REvision 2000*, taking into account how other subject areas were being assessed and recorded, exploring different models and tools for assessment.

The Working Party recognised the need to consult with practitioners throughout the process of producing assessment materials for schools. The initial consultation in March 2003 with Headteachers and Religious Education Co-ordinators had a two-fold purpose i.e. to mirror the INSET provided nationally for the advisers and to share the fruits of the working party thus far. (Targets for children working in Curriculum Religious Education – based on the Clive Davies 5 step process).

Following this consultation the Working Party made the decision to produce half-termly activities for each year group linked to specific strands in both attainment targets. The pilot group sent in samples of work with comments from class teachers, some of whom had levelled the pieces of work and carried out in-house moderation exercises. Further moderation was carried out by the working party and clarifications were made as this process continued over the next academic year.

The Religious Education Co-ordinators in the pilot schools kept the working party informed of staff concerns and the need for clarification on certain aspects of the framework. These concerns were discussed at national level with advisers in several dioceses reporting the same concerns. This resulted in the National Assessment Working Party reconvening with the Salford Diocesan Advisers forming part of that group.

Further consultation in the Salford Diocese followed in Autumn 2004 when thirteen of the pilot schools came together to share their experiences of working with the assessment activities; thanks to their generosity and co-operation we were able to move forward with preparations for this pack.

In May 2005 significant changes were made to the National Framework and the Salford Diocesan Working Party made great efforts to ensure that the assessment activities for each half term were adjusted to take account of these changes. We continue to work with both the NBRIA Working Party and the pilot schools in order that we can continue to improve provision for Religious Education.

RATIONALE

What is Religious Education? We find the overall purpose of Religious Education within the context of the educational mission of the Catholic school.

“This educational mission entails the on-going development of the entire potential of every person. It seeks to promote the well-being and freedom of every person, made in the image and likeness of God and finding fulfilment in God alone. This is the vision which shapes the daily life of a Catholic school as a community in which faith is expressed and shared through every aspect of its activity. Through the pattern of daily prayer, through the celebration of the sacraments of the Church, through works of charity, through a striving for justice in all it does, a Catholic school seeks to be a catechetical community in which the content and the life of faith is shared.”

(Religious Education in Catholic Schools May 2000 - *a statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales*) To see the full statement please see **Appendix 1**.

Religious Education plays a central part in promoting the Christian vision of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God. Religious Education is therefore the core subject in the Catholic school and must be taught with the same rigour as any other subject area.

In the words of the Curriculum Directory (1996: *The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales*) the outcome of all our teaching is

“religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.” (Pg.10)

Whilst aware of the catechetical task of the whole school, within this context we are clear that the specific contribution to the life of the Catholic school of classroom Religious Education is primarily educational. The purpose of Religious Education is to draw pupils into a systematic study of the teaching of the Church, the saving mystery of Christ which the Church proclaims.

Why Assessment? As professionals we want to ensure that we provide the best Religious Education for all children.

“Excellence in religious education then will be characterised by a clarity of succinct religious learning objectives and of key content, by appropriate methodologies, rigour, richness of resources, achievement of identified outcomes and accurate methods of assessment”.

(Religious Education in Catholic Schools May 2000 - *a statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales*)

As a subject on the school curriculum Religious Education is concerned with **Learning about Religion** the development of knowledge and understanding and **Learning from Religion** the ability to respond, evaluate and apply knowledge.

These aspects of developments are expressed as

- Attainment Target 1 (Learning about Religion)
Knowledge and Understanding of:
 - i) beliefs, teachings and sources
 - ii) celebration and ritual
 - iii) practices and way of life

- Attainment Target 2 (Learning from Religion)
Response, evaluation and application:
 - i) engagement with own and others' beliefs and values
 - ii) engagement with questions of meaning and purpose
 - iii) reflection and contemplation

In practice these attainment targets are often dealt with together. Both are concerned with educational progression that can be described by levels. The purpose of this pack is to assist teachers in carrying out assessment in Religious Education without losing sight of all the afore-mentioned aims.

What is assessment? Assessment means a judgement about the achievement of a pupil or group of pupils made by the pupil or pupils themselves, by a teacher, or by some combination of these. This judgement must be based on evidence from one or more or a variety of sources, such as observation, the process of negotiation, written work. Its purpose is one or more of the following:

- to enable the pupil(s) to reflect on and acknowledge personal or group achievement
- to help pupil(s) to take the next step in learning
- to communicate with interested parties about the achievement of the pupil(s)
- to enable teachers to monitor pupil progress
- to enable teachers to monitor the effectiveness of their own work”

From Forms Of Assessment in Religious Education

The Main Report of the FARE Project, University of Exeter School of Education

GOOD ASSESSMENT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Good assessment in Religious Education is part of the teaching and learning process and not an added extra bolted on at the end of the planning process.

It balances the formative (what children already know and understand), the diagnostic (usually in a test form and indicating where children are failing to develop in their understanding) and the summative (the progress children have made in their knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes). It has clear and achievable objectives which the children are aware of and builds on previous learning and opens up new directions and developments.

Good assessment involves children directly in their learning and it communicates clearly to other interested groups, such as parents, the progress children are making in Religious Education. It is concerned with making informed judgements from a clear evidence base which involves the collation and use of different kinds of evidence (oral, written, creative and artistic expression) over a period of time. Some aspects of Religious Education (e.g. children's spiritual development and matters they wish to keep private) are not appropriate for formal assessment.

The following approaches are examples of good practice in assessment.

ASSESSMENT – (i) General observations

Teachers are continually making informal, professional assessments of individual pupils. They become aware of a pupil's level of understanding and growth in skills by observing their ability:

- to listen
- to ask relevant questions
- to respond to questions
- to interact with others
- to work with others
- to be still
- to understand
- to remember

Typical classroom tasks observed, which demonstrate the extent to which pupils are achieving the intended learning outcome, are:

- engaging in creative play
- planning and completing a piece of written work
- planning, creating or mounting a display
- creating and performing drama or 'play'
- discussing an issue and drawing conclusions
- engaging in role play
- composing a hymn, song or poem
- preparing a celebration or liturgy
- planning and completing a piece of art or craft

Good teachers know a group is working well when:

- pupils are on task
- pupils are taking part in discussion
- they are involved in and enjoy learning
- they are evaluating their own and others' contributions
- they are selecting appropriate methods and organising effectively the resources they need
- they are co-operating with each other
- the learning intention is being achieved
- progress is visible

Observation will enable the teacher to ascertain that the task:

- is understood
- is appropriately differentiated
- enables learning
- presents challenge to pupils

ASSESSMENT – (ii) End of task review

Pupils are enabled to assess the work they have done. Criteria for such assessment is agreed with the pupils and includes such questions as:

- Do we understand the task?
- How far have we got?
- What do we know and understand now?
- How well have we worked together?

A degree of honesty and maturity is needed but pupils can be encouraged to assess whether or not targets have been met by reflecting on their work, comparing it with others and discussing it with peers, support assistants or teachers.

ASSESSMENT – (iii) End of lesson review

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and share what they have learnt during the lesson as individuals and as a group. The teacher may ask specific questions to discover which learning objectives have been achieved. The teacher then effectively summarises and reinforces learning that has taken place, and keeps a note of learning objectives which need to be revisited.

ASSESSMENT – (iv) End of half term assessment

This form of summative assessment is probably the most common assessment used in school. It brings together the teaching and learning for each individual involved in a unit of work but also provides a group response and a group assessment. Consequently there will also be elements of diagnostic and evaluative assessment. The greater the repertoire of assessment tasks used the richer the possibilities of response.

Achievement can be demonstrated through art, drama, mime, music, visual representation (photograph, video, slide) celebration and liturgy, as well as through written work including summaries of discussion, collation of findings and topic evaluations by teacher and pupil. It can be expressed individually or collectively and in combinations of any of these forms. By offering pupils a variety of media in which to express their achievement the teacher is encouraging self-expression in verbal and non-verbal ways.

Display

A topic display offers evidence of pupil achievement and also celebrates this. The possibility for written, art and graphic work allows individuals to select a medium of their own choice to express what they now know and understand of the topic covered. The standard set by the teacher ensures that the best efforts go into this summative statement. Building the creation of a display into the planning of the topic means that it can grow throughout the topic rather than consume a disproportionate amount of time at the end. A growing knowledge and understanding brings a continuous process of assessment that informs the development of the topic.

ASSESSMENT – (v) Marking and commenting on work

A personal verbal dialogue between teacher and pupil is encouraged whenever possible.

Marking work in Religious Education needs to be:

- consistent with the school's marking policy;
- positive and constructive so that it affirms and celebrates success and encourages future learning;
- serve to challenge and encourage pupils to reflect;
- encourage high standards;
- give attention to key vocabulary.

Comments made will reflect on the progress in understanding of the Religious Education concept or concepts being explored.

Consistency of approach across the Key Stages is important.

Recording

Recording in Religious Education recognises the distinct nature of the subject.

Assessments made and the consequent records kept will:

- recognise a wide range of achievement;
- be selective because not all evidence is suitable for recording or is able to be recorded;
- be positive in order to record what pupils have done and can achieve;
- relate to achievement in Religious Education and will not record issues which have a place in the broader profile for the pupil (general behaviour and attitudes);
- be open and based on collaboration between the teacher and pupil wherever possible.

When recording for Religious Education is simple and straightforward it avoids becoming an unnecessary burden for the teacher.

Reasons for and ways of keeping records

Schools keep a record of the experiences offered pupils in order to ensure continuity and progression within and across Key Stages.

This information will be found:

- in the scheme of work for Religious Education;
- in long, medium and short term planning.

Recording provides evidence of, and celebrates, the individual's achievements.

This can take many forms:

- notes from observations;
- comments written on pupils' work;
- outcomes of tasks;
- portfolios – containing a selection of work indicating the understanding and achievement of a pupil. (Portfolios of pupils' work without written comment are of little value.);
- pupil profiles – comprising dated statements agreed between teacher and the pupil indicating their reflection on the work undertaken.

At specific times in the pupil's school career there is a need to summarise the evidence gathered from assessments in order to inform pupils, parents and teachers of progress in Religious Education. This summary is produced by dating evidence or by writing a few sentences describing the pupil's achievements during the time covered.

School portfolios provide evidence of the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education for teachers, governors, parents and inspectors. This is provided by year group, Key Stage or whole school portfolios containing examples of pupils' work, together with teachers comments.

Reporting

Reporting in Religious Education is a natural part of teaching and integral to the learning process.

There are four dimensions to reporting in Religious Education:

1 It provides feedback to pupils on their achievements and progress through:

- informal discussion with pupils;
- regular and constructive marking of pupil's work;
- compilation of pupil profiles.

2 It informs teacher colleagues of the achievement of individual pupils and the areas studied by a class and year group through sharing and passing on:

- summative records;
- pupil profiles;
- summary records of work covered.

3 It informs parents of the progress and achievement of their children through:

- Religious Education curriculum meetings;
- pupils, parent and teacher discussion;
- written reports;
- Religious Education assemblies;
- displays of work;
- photographic records of dance, drama and musical presentations.

4 It informs parents, governors, parish and external agencies of the content and quality of Religious Education being provided and the achievements of the pupils through:

- curriculum documents;
- headteacher's report to governors;
- curriculum meetings;
- Religious Education assemblies;
- photographic records of dance, drama and musical presentations;
- displays of work.
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The process of reporting the overall achievement of pupils to parents is a means of communication which contributes to the partnership between teacher and parents in the developing role of Religious Education. It offers opportunities for discussion and collaboration with an understanding of the part played by both in the life of the school. The celebration of this achievement is seen as an integral part of the whole teaching and learning process.

(Guidelines for the Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Religious Education NBRIA 1998)

This pack is a tool to help teachers to become familiar with and confident in using the National Levels of Attainment in Religious Education **as part of** the assessment process. It is designed to help teachers make judgements on the achievements of a child's learning. The outcome of a task often depends on the nature of the given task. It is important that tasks are well planned, relevant to the aims and objectives and challenging for the pupils.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

The contents of this file are to be used as a guide only; schools may adapt it to suit their own need using their professional judgement.

The premise is made that religious education will involve children **Learning about Religion (A.T.1) and Learning from Religion (A.T.2)**

Within each of these Attainment Targets there are three strands:

A.T.1 Knowledge and Understanding of:

- i) beliefs, teachings and sources
- ii) celebration and ritual
- iii) social and moral practices and way of life

A.T.2 Response, evaluation and application about

- i) engagement with own and others beliefs and values
- ii) engagement with questions of meaning and purpose
- iii) reflection and contemplation

ASSESSMENT TASKS

- This file contains assessment tasks for each year group for every half term of the academic year
- The tasks are designed to cover all strands of both Attainment Targets over the course of the year
- Tasks are flexible and may be tailored to the needs of the school
- Coverage of all attainment targets must be borne in mind if any alterations are made to assessment tasks e.g. if only one assessment task is used per term then a rolling programme must be developed to ensure adequate coverage of all strands

HOW TO USE THE LEVELS

As in other subjects, progression in Religious Education is not always predictable and pupils of the same age will be at different levels of attainment. In some cases pupils' experiences will lead to exceptional insights, while in other cases there will be an apparent lack of understanding. In judging pupil progress single statements from a level cannot be taken in isolation. Progression within an individual strand may not always be sequential according to the order given, but in general, progression will match the pattern indicated.

In order to determine the overall level of attainment of a pupil the teacher should:

- relate the achievement of learning outcomes from individual modules of work to the appropriate level descriptors in relation to each attainment target;
- make a judgement on a "best-fit" basis about the specific level of attainment across the two targets.

("Level of Attainment in Religious Education" 2000 NBR1A)

In the section marked **TOOLKIT** there are some proforma which may help the class teacher or Religious Education Co-ordinator to make judgements about children's work.

The "*Levels of Attainment*" judgement sheet (T1) would be useful to the class teacher when evaluating individual pieces of work.

The "*Individual Pupil Record Sheet*" (T2) provides an alternative way of gathering evidence within the Levels of Attainment matrix.

The form "*Monitoring: Pupils' Work and Teacher's Planning*" (T3) could be used by the co-ordinator for monitoring and during scrutiny of children's work, in order to check that coverage of the appropriate attainment targets has been made.

All of these forms are on the disc and may be adapted to suit individual needs.

AWARDING A LEVEL TO PUPILS' WORK

- An explanation of the criteria required to accomplish a particular level within each strand is provided in the Matrix entitled **Levels of Attainment in Religious Education**
- Behind most assessment tasks is a moderated piece of work which has been levelled. An explanation is included as to why the piece of work achieved a particular level (Many include advice on how to achieve the next level)
- The exemplars are only drawn from schools taking part in the trialling of this assessment material. Consequently exemplars for all assessment tasks are not yet available but may be in the future