



Diocese of Westminster

EDUCATION SERVICE

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LEVELS OF ATTAINMENT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Agreed Understandings

AT 2. (ii) Learning From Religion

Reflection on Meaning – engagement with questions of meaning and purpose.

In this strand pupils will be confronting the difficult questions which all people have to face; they will be thinking critically about their own questions of meaning and purpose and about the ways in which people of all faiths and none have struggled with similar questions; they will be exploring the evidence and arguments used by people of different faiths and other traditions to justify their position; they will be developing the ability to express their own point of view.

NOTE: The ability to say what you wonder about is not replaced by an ability to ask questions: rather it is enhanced by it. Similarly, the inclusion of religious teaching can be prompted in discussions with pupils of all ages and abilities: it should not wait until pupils have achieved 'Level 3'. This strand, with its focus on wondering about big issues, may therefore be better considered as a circle of developing skills through which one wanders rather than a ladder of achievement that one climbs.

Given that AT 2 learns from AT 1, the beliefs, teachings, practices and way of life taught at AT 1 provide the content of this strand. Noting the inclusion of the skills outlined at each level may be described better as **monitoring** rather than **assessment**.

| Level | AT 2 (ii) engagement with questions of meaning and purpose | Our understanding | Issues | Prompt Questions to ascertain learning. |
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| 1 | Say what they wonder about. | Pupils will be able to express, simply, what they are thinking about. | <p>The skill of wondering is critical in the development of contemplation, reflection and awe in children and to the formation of a sense of the sacred. It is important that teachers model their own wondering; about feelings, ideas, big thoughts, dreams and concepts.</p> <p>When children are young the teacher might articulate the religious thought for them.</p> | <p>FOR ALL LEVELS: I'm wondering.....what are you wondering about?</p> <p>Pupils should be encouraged and enabled to wonder, about the beliefs, questions, dilemmas and decisions that people of all generations have had to face. The best wondering questions are likely to have many possible and feasible answers. They will be messy, grey and <i>provoke</i> thought rather than <i>define</i> it.</p> |
| 2 | Ask questions about what they and others wonder about and realise that some of these questions are difficult to answer. | <p>The skill of good discussion, of listening to and asking about the views of others, indicates a sense of the world bigger than just the pupils themselves.</p> <p>At level 2 pupils will be able to ask questions about some of the things that they think about.</p> | <p>The observation, at this level, that some questions are hard to answer, may be seen at two levels: At a literal level some factual questions are indeed hard to answer. These are not the matter of this strand. What are, are those questions for which there is no clear answer or differing quite reasonable answers. These are the 'big questions' of AT 2 (ii).</p> | <p>Teachers should be mindful that the big questions of life invariably come from areas other than RE: religious thought has developed to seek answers to them.</p> <p>The age and development of pupils will always determine the particular questions that should be explored: this constitutes an important increase in the development of AT 2.</p> |

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| 3 | Compare their own and other people's ideas about questions that are difficult to answer. | The 'big questions' now provide the subject of this strand: pupils at Level 3 are able to hear, listen to and compare differing views. | | What do you (others) think? I don't know! Its hard to decide. |
| 4 | Engage with and respond to questions of life in the light of religious teaching. | This level requires the explicit inclusion of the 'voice of the tradition' into the wondering. Pupils should be involved in two way thought: both asking about and responding to (reacting or replying to) questions. | Pupil learning at AT 1 should be brought to bear on the questions that pupils ponder. | What would God whisper? What should we remember? Can what we have learned inform our view? |
| 5 | Demonstrate how religious beliefs and teaching give some explanation of the purpose and meaning of human life. | The key words here are 'demonstrate how'. This is understood to mean that pupils are able to explain (give reasons for) how religious teaching offers answers to big questions about life. | Level 5 does not explicitly ask for pupils to express their own view: this should be understood to be implicit in this strand. While pupils at this level will be using their learning at AT 1 to inform their position, the view pupils express should be their own one, not one they have learned. | How do our religious beliefs help us understand this question? |
| 6 | Explain with reference to religious beliefs their own and others' answers to questions of meaning. | The move to level 6 is one of 'width' not depth. Pupils at Level 6 extend their consideration of questions of meaning to include the views of others. In keeping with other strands at Level 6, the faiths of others re restricted to those of Christians. | | What do you think? Is your view shared by other Christians? |
| 7 | Evaluate religious and nonreligious views and beliefs on questions of | Level 7 across the Levels of Attainment asks for consideration of more than one religion. In this | The notion of critical thought and evaluation appears differently across the strands of Level 7. | What are the pluses and minuses about the different responses to this issue? |

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| | meaning and purpose. | <p>strand those who hold no religious beliefs are considered.</p> <p>In their consideration of big questions, pupils now evaluate, that is weigh up and appraise, the views of people, religious and non-religious.</p> | <p>AT 1 (iii) asks for <i>critical evaluation</i>, defined as the ability a pupil has to analyse and critically evaluate arguments and evidence, at Level 7.</p> <p>AT 2 (i) asks for <i>critical thought</i> at Level 7: AT 2 (ii) now asks for evaluation.</p> <p>We may understand that evaluation implies the consideration (analysis) and appraisal of a variety of views, including those of the Catholic Church, and the drawing of a conclusion about their validity and authority.</p> | <p>What weaknesses are there in particular positions?</p> <p>Can you hold two views in tension? Can two perspectives be right?</p> |
| 8 | Synthesise a range of evidence, arguments, reflections and examples to justify their own views and ideas on questions of meaning and purpose. | <p>The analysis and evaluation required at Level 7 is now brought together to form a position on an issue of meaning and purpose. The instruction here to <i>synthesise</i> a wide range of information alerts to the need for a level of independence in thought in the creation of their view.</p> <p>Level 8 at AT 1 asks for coherence in thought: this can be expected here.</p> | <p>Analysis describes the breaking down of a range of views: synthesis is the building up or creation of a new view. Both contribute towards the development of an informed and coherent position.</p> <p>Continuing the expectation of Level 7 pupils in this Level will be working with a range of religious and non-religious views including that held by Catholics.</p> | <p>What is your view? Can you argue this view from an informed position?</p> <p>How do the positions of those around you inform your own view?</p> |
| EP | Provide an independent, informed and well-argued account of their | At this level pupils' responses to questions on meaning and purpose will be independent (not the | | |

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| | own and others' views on questions of meaning, purpose and fulfilment with reference to religious and moral traditions and standpoints. | articulation of those learned) well informed (draw on extensive knowledge of a variety of religious and non-religious views), and well argued (coherent, logical and reasoned.) | | |
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