Responding to pupil’s needs when teaching Religious Education

The importance of religious education to pupils with learning difficulties Religion is the experience and expression of faith. Learning about religion and learning from religion are important for all pupils, as religious education (RE) helps pupils develop an understanding of themselves and others. RE promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of individuals and of groups and communities.

In particular, RE offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:

• develop their self-confidence and awareness

• understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups

• bring their own experiences and understanding of life into the classroom

• develop positive attitudes towards others, respecting their beliefs and experience

• reflect on and consider their own values and those of others

• deal with issues that form the basis for personal choices and behaviour.

In response to these opportunities, pupils can make progress in RE:

• by moving from a personal to a wider perspective

• by increasing their knowledge of religious beliefs, practices and experiences

• through developing understanding of the meaning of stories, symbols, events and pictures

• through developing and communicating their individual responses to a range of views.

When developing the RE curriculum, schools will need to take into consideration local requirements and regional variations in cultural and religious experiences. This subject guidance is intended to support the guidance available through agreed syllabuses and the national curriculum programmes of study and show ways of teaching RE to pupils with learning difficulties.

Learning about religion

For all pupils, their knowledge and understanding of different religions begins with awareness that some objects and people are special. They start to experience different religions in their own community and the wider world. They learn about similarities and differences and recognise the value of contact with people practising different religions.

Teaching this attainment target across key stages can help pupils to:

• encounter religious ideas expressed in a range of ways, for example, through pictures and sounds

• explore the special elements in religions represented in the UK, for example, music, food and artefacts

• find out how people express their religious beliefs, for example, singing and prayer

• discover how religions deal with loss and bereavement

• meet and communicate with people practising religions represented in the UK

• find out about religion in their community

• recognise and celebrate the similarities and differences in people and religions

• become familiar with a range of stories from a number of religions and cultures.

***Learning from religion***

Learning from religion begins with awareness that each pupil is personally valued and that others are special too. Pupils with learning difficulties should have opportunities to explore what it means to be part of a group and to learn how to share with others. They express their ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.

Teaching this attainment target across key stages can help pupils to:

• appreciate the world

• explore the significance of, and ask questions about, what they learn

• explore the things, times and events that are special in their lives, for example, music, food and celebrations

• experience times of stillness and quietness and develop the skill of reflection

• share feelings, experiences and their work with others

• appreciate the value of others and of being part of a group

• develop an understanding of moral values.