

Communication to Schools

New Messages for RE in Schools: Transforming Religious Education

The latest Ofsted Report on RE: *Transforming Religious Education?* (6 June 2010) resulted in a national day conference on RE on 1st October 2010 to investigate how RE could be more effective. The main message was that learning should be based on enquiry and therefore should:

- Promote challenge and active involvement of pupils
- Start from and develop pupil's questions
- Incorporate exploring controversy
- Focus on skills rather than content
- Allow for a wide variety of imaginative tasks
- Address pupil's personal development
- Ensure pupils develop arguments, suggest interpretations and present evidence and findings
- Ensure pupils use empathy, critical thought and evaluation and reflect on how their learning might apply to their own and others' lives
- Focus on the learning process and progression, breadth of study (the progressive links between learning across and within key stages and coverage of the curriculum and its religions) and attainment

What does this mean for teachers of RE in Portsmouth?

- Portsmouth already has an Agreed Syllabus based on a distinctive approach to enquiry through concepts (Living Difference 2004; revised 2010) which explains how to implement this approach
- Teachers should ensure that they feel secure that they are implementing this approach successfully by measuring progression against the levels of attainment in the Agreed Syllabus and by observing the effectiveness of pupil's participation in lessons
- Teachers should ensure that breadth of study and progression is systematic and effective within and across key stages and leads to enhanced GCSE performance
- Teachers should ensure that addressing key skills (such as interpretation, evaluation and critical thought), questioning, imaginative tasks, and pupil's personal development are evident in both planning and delivery
- Teachers should ensure that addressing community cohesion is built in to their breadth of study along with understanding different religious and non-religious beliefs, so that pupils can appreciate difference but understand how it can result in a strong but diverse and cohesive society

How can schools be sure they are implementing this approach successfully?

- Work together within and across key stages sharing and reviewing planning and delivery
- Critically assess how improvements can be made
- Use the local authority and its consultants to monitor and improve practice