

ASSESSMENT in RE

Key messages from REC Hub meeting Spring 2026

Headteachers and Chairs of Governors



Come, my Light,
and illumine my darkness.

Come, my Life,
and revive me from death.

Come, my Physician,
and heal my wounds.

Come, Flame of divine love,
and burn up the thorns of my sins,
kindling my heart
with the flame of thy love.

Assessment

1. Who is assessment for in RE?
2. What is good assessment in RE?
3. What is assessment for in RE?

Assessment in RE: context

The RED Assessment Toolkit has been developed by members of NBRIA (The National Board of Inspectors and Advisers) in conjunction with the CES (Catholic Education Service) to support Dioceses and their schools in assessing the Expected outcomes and the Ways of knowing found in the RED.

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles

Introduction

Guidance and Principles for Assessment in Religious Education offers guidance.

It is not to be seen as a 'rule book' to create identical assessment across all schools. Instead, it is intended to give context to the rest of the Toolkit.

It explores the **role of assessment in RE**, the **expectations and content of the RED**, and the **role of assessment in wider teaching pedagogy**.

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

The RED states: ***Knowledge lenses** set out the **object of study** for pupils; they indicate **what should be known by the end of each age-phase**.*

*They are referred to as lenses, since they are **the things we are looking at***



Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

Ways of knowing set out the skills that pupils should be developing as they progress through their curriculum journey. Whenever we know something, we always know it in more than one way: we remember it, we critically assimilate it, and we put it into practice.

All three are ways of coming to know the things that are the object of our study.

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

*Expected outcomes are a **synthesis** of the content outlined in the **knowledge lenses** and the **skills** described in the **ways of knowing**. Each age-phase will have a **prescribed set of outcomes** that will **indicate** what pupils are expected **to know, remember, and be able to do**, using the language of the ways of knowing and applying it to the discrete knowledge within each lens... (RED p20)*

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

*...It is against these expected outcomes that schools will assess pupil progress, **both formatively and summatively**.*

*This directory does not prescribe a particular approach to assessment but **does provide clear expectations for each age-phase** that will allow meaningful assessment to occur.*

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

These age-related expectations also provide a basis for consistency of expectation in all schools across England and Wales. In turn, this will allow the Catholic Schools Inspectorate to make judgements about the quality of religious education in each school inspected under the National Framework for the Inspection of Catholic School, Colleges and Academies...

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

There are no Expected outcomes for EYFS so schools can look at the RELGs in the RED (p71-77 RED) for guidance as children should be making progress from the beginning to the end of the EYFS in line with the Early Learning Goals.

Statutory guidance on EYFS ELGs can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f68b0eb8fa8f50763644e5e/Early_adopter_schools_EYFS_profile_handbook.pdf

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

NB: The Expected outcomes that are prescribed in Part 2.3 of the RED only relate to the *Understand* Way of knowing.

However, the Discern Way of knowing is mandatory, and the RED expects evidence of progression of this skill.

Occasionally, lens content appears in a Discern outcome only. These exemplars should be followed

6.3

Celebrate

By the end of this unit of study, pupils will know:

- Different representations in art or music of one of the signs from St John's gospel or one of the 'I am' statements studied.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| D6.3.2 | Looking at different artistic representations of at least one of the signs in St John's gospel and discussing the artists' use of symbolic representation, expressing and sharing a personal preference, giving reasons for their choice and listen to contrary points of view. (RVE) |
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Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

The Outcome of Religious Education

When beginning any conversation about assessment in RE, one must always bear in mind the purpose of RE in our Catholic schools (RED pp13-15) and the outcome of RE.

When our young people leave us in Y11 or Y13, what is the expectation of their accumulated learning in RE?

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

The Outcome of Religious Education

The RED states the following in Article 3 – Outcome of religious education:

‘The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and consciously engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who recognise the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.’

(RED p6)

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

The Outcome of Religious Education

Whilst the RED identifies expected outcomes it is **important that the wider outcome of RE outlined above remains the goal for learning in RE, and how that learning speaks to the rest of the curriculum and the wider Catholic life and mission of the school.**

Assessment in RE: Guiding Principles - context

Assessment will demonstrate that the learning has taken place.

The learning that has taken place should reflect these aims above.

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

RE should be assessing both skills and content as set out in the RED in order to achieve the outcome of RE (RED p6).

1. The RED requires a progressive and sequential curriculum (see Expected end of Phase Outcomes RED p41-60).

It relies on the **accumulation of knowledge and development of skills**. Schools where pupils are teaching the model curriculum are enabled to **make links between branches and prior learning** from previous years. The introduction to the year of learning and the 'Notes for teachers' at the start of each branch within the RED make reference to some of the progression and links that can be made. However **teachers will need to identify how and where content and skills build on learning from earlier year groups, and where it will develop** future years.

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

2. Assessment is one element of the wider endeavour of teaching and learning.

It should **always be of benefit to the children and young people** studying RE, and it should **always be part of the planned curriculum.**

There are **different ways to assess learning** in RE, and each way has its place.

For example, **formative assessment is essential for adaptive teaching** as it enables the teacher to assess what learning has taken place, if there are any misconceptions and whether further input is required.

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

2. Assessment is one element of the wider endeavour of teaching and learning.

Both **summative and formative assessment enable teachers to check progress** *'when measured against the planned curriculum by knowing more, remembering more and doing more'* (CSI Inspection Handbook v.4.0 (p51)).

Assessment must be purposeful and useful.

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

3. The *Discern* and *Understand* ways of knowing must be formally assessed.

In the RED, **Understand outcomes are prescribed** and, therefore, **must be assessed**. **Discern outcomes in the RED are examples**, so it is **not essential** that these specified outcomes are taught.

However, **pupils must be given the opportunity to discern**, and **this discerning must be assessed**. Therefore, if you are **writing your own Discern outcomes** they **must demonstrate the same level of challenge** as in the given **examples**.

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

3. The *Discern* and *Understand* ways of knowing must be formally assessed.

Although *Respond* is not formally assessed, **RE must offer regular invitations for children and young people to respond.** This is an essential element of learning in RE that will nurture '*consciously engaged young people*' who can '*reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically*' (RED p6).

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

4. Planning should reflect that all the expected outcomes are evidenced at an appropriate point and in a variety of ways appropriate to a pupil's age and capacity.

Whether these outcomes are assessed, for example, in class, in a mid-term/end of term assessment or in an end of year assessment, **pupils should have the opportunity to show whether they are meeting the expected standard.**

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

4. Planning should reflect that all the *Expected age-phase outcomes* are evidenced at an appropriate point and in a variety of ways appropriate to a pupil's age and capacity.

NB: For pupils in the primary phase, there are age-related expected outcomes for the Ways of Knowing in the form of '**end-of-year summary statements**' at the end of each year's content: for example, for children aged 6, these learning outcomes can be found in the RED (p95). **These may be particularly useful in planning curriculum for mixed-age classes.**

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

5. Summative assessment should require pupils to demonstrate the expected knowledge and skills independently in an age-appropriate manner.

Especially when used for reporting and accountability, whether

- at the end of a sequence of learning,
- at the end of a branch,
- at the end of a number of branches or
- at the end of a year,

summative assessment should require pupils to **demonstrate the expected knowledge and skills independently** in an age-appropriate manner. **For example**, a stimulus/image/prompt/scaffold may be used appropriate to the age and capacity of pupils, but it **should not be an 'open book' exercise or a homework task.**

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

5. Summative assessment should require pupils to demonstrate the expected knowledge and skills independently in an age-appropriate manner.

Year One: Revelation – how do people know about God?

Year Two: The Sacrament of Baptism

Year Three: Celebrating the Eucharist

Year Four: How people have been transformed by God

Year Five: The significance of the OT as part of the Christian understanding of the revelation of Jesus

Year Six: The Gospel of St John

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

6. To protect the integrity of each age phase (and year group), outcomes in each branch within the RED set a standard by which pupils should be assessed.

Pupils should not be expected to demonstrate skills beyond those set out in the model curriculum in their given year group (or in the case of mixed age classes, their age-phase) in order to meet expected outcomes.

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

6. To protect the integrity of each age phase (and year group, outcomes in each branch within the Model curriculum set a standard by which pupils should be assessed.

The RED expects a progression of skills. For example, the model curriculum for pupils aged 5-7 requires pupils to **‘recognise’** and **‘retell’** scripture passages; **‘understanding’** of scripture and **‘making links’** is a skill introduced at age-phase 7-9.

Assessment in RE: Overarching Principles

Overarching Principles of Assessment in Religious Education

For schools not following the model curriculum please see Principle 1, above, with regard to progression.

NB: The RED offers expected outcomes only. At this stage greater depth cannot and should not be assessed.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Introduction

'Using Questions to Assess in Religious Education' aims to support teachers in **designing effective assessment questions and tasks** for learners.

It is put together to **indicate examples of how each driver stem might be assessed using certain question stems** which can then be used to form a task, summative assessment, or a verbal question to pupils.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Introduction

The questions are designed to support teachers in formulating appropriate **assessments which allow pupils the opportunity to show that they have met / can meet the expected outcomes of the RED.**

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

1. These are exemplars only.

Teachers should use their skill and judgement to determine the most appropriate task or question for the context they are in. This will include **considering; the pupil(s)** being assessed, **the content and skill** being assessed, and any **school expectations and policies** around assessment.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

1. These are exemplars only.

Determine the most appropriate task or question for the context

U2.4.3.	Correctly use religious words and phrases when describing in an age-appropriate way the Sacrament of Reconciliation, making simple connections between the sacrament and a belief in God's forgiveness.
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What are the words and phrases you would teach and therefore expect to see/hear from Y2 pupils?

Forgiveness
Kyrie Eleison
Reconciliation
Sin

Believe

By the end of this unit of study, pupils will know that the Church teaches:

- That Jesus gave us the Sacrament of Reconciliation to heal and restore our friendship with God and through this ourselves.
- That Lent is a time of preparing our hearts and minds for Easter through reconciliation and forgiveness.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

2. *Discern* outcomes may well require *Understand* outcomes to have first been met.

For instance, pupils might be unsuccessful at some *Discern* stems if **they have not first understood the content** (met the *Understand* outcome(s)). For example, **it is expected that knowledge has been acquired before understanding and then analysis can happen.** It is therefore understood that a *Discern* question or task might allow a pupil to demonstrate their understanding and for a teacher to assess this.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

2. *Discern* outcomes may well require *Understand* outcomes to have first been met.

D1.5.1.	Imagining how the apostles felt during the events following the Resurrection.
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D3.5.1.	Saying what they wonder about the story of Emmaus and when the disciples recognised Jesus. (RVE)
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D5.5.1.	Saying what they wonder about the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus and mystery of the Holy Trinity.
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Using Discern as a hook or starter activity before the learning begins

Take the time to revisit this activity after the learning has taken place. What are pupil responses like now? Have they deepened?

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

3. Whilst the *Understand* Way of Knowing includes knowledge and understanding, knowledge should not be mistaken for understanding.

Understanding requires pupil knowledge: **solely assessing knowledge does not show understanding.** However, **understanding is a skill that first requires knowledge and recall.**

Knowledge is the 'pieces of the jigsaw',

Understanding is the full picture.

Stems that imply knowledge and recall are included below to show how a teacher might facilitate pupils to move to a place where they can demonstrate their understanding at a later stage or during a later task.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

4. Where the stems reflect the skills of AO1 and AO2 this should not be seen as a license to use summative assessments that are in 'GCSE style'.

Teachers should **protect the integrity of the age phase** (see *Guidance and Principles for Assessment in RE*, p.8, no.6). **Some of the stems below may also be appropriate stems for GCSE or A level.** This is in recognition that **each age phase builds upon the previous one** until the end of a pupil's schooling. Teachers should also **refer to pages 37-39 of the RED** for examples of stems relevant to each age phase.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

5. It is how pupils respond to these stems that indicates if they have met the expected outcomes.

For example, a **stem might be useful in multiple year groups/age phases**, but the pupil **response should not necessarily be the same**.

U1.6.3.	Recognise simple connections between Jesus' life and message and how Christians live today. (RVE)
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U6.6.4.	Recognise links and simple connections between some Dharmic beliefs, practices, and way of life making links between them. (RVE)
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Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

6. Teachers are reminded that *Respond* should not be assessed.

The 'Questions Stems' section below includes examples of question stems and **how pupils might answer the invitation to *Respond*.**

These are included **so teachers can continue to leave space for pupils to 'reflect** personally and with integrity on what they have learned and consider the implications for action' (RED p36).

R1.5.1.	Thinking about why prayer is an important part of life for many people. (RVE)
R1.5.2.	Hearing the words of the Glory Be and hymns that reference Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and joining in prayerfully if they choose to do so.
R1.5.3.	Considering how Christians announce the Gospel to others through their words and actions.



Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

7. Care should be taken to avoid forcing content into stems where it is not appropriate.

This can happen when a *Discern* task is used with a topic for which there is no ethical or theological debate.

For example, it is not appropriate to ask pupils to evaluate if 'Confirmation is the most important sacrament' since the importance of Confirmation and the other sacraments should not be compared (it is theologically true that they are all important).

When in doubt teachers ought to use the exemplar *Discern* outcomes found in the expected outcomes of the RED.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

A note on Learning Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Whilst advising on learning objectives is beyond the remit of this document, a few points might be noted here:

- 1. A learning objective and an expected outcome are not the same thing.**

NB: The RED is a teacher-facing book, not a pupil facing book.
For example, it would generally be inappropriate to use language from the RED as titles or LOs in pupil books.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

A note on Learning Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Whilst advising on learning objectives is beyond the remit of this document, a few points might be noted here:

2. Teachers do not have to share objectives with pupils that are identical to the outcomes listed in the RED.

It *might* be appropriate to reword these into ‘pupil friendly’ language whilst maintaining the essence of what they require.

This may be over a series of lessons, or several outcomes may be covered in a single lesson.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

A note on Learning Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Whilst advising on learning objectives is beyond the remit of this document, a few points might be noted here:

3. Pupils do not have to be given the exact wording of an outcome as a question stem or learning objective to meet it.

Teachers should use their own judgement to decide how to word a question, task, or objective to meet the expected outcome.

For example, it might be unhelpful to start a task with 'show understanding of.....', instead a teacher might ask/set a task that begins with 'explain why...', 'give reasons for...', 'make links with...' which might provide the pupil with the chance to show they can meet the expected outcome.

Assessment in RE: Question stems

Using the question stems

- Look at the *draft* question stems document.
- In pairs/small groups, look at the EOs for Branch 4
- Using the question stems, write a series of questions that would lead to the achieving of the EOs
- Plan this as a sequence of learning
- How many lessons would this cover?

Where would the Discern and Respond opportunities fit?

Assessment and CSI

In an inspection...

Talk about:

- The national tool kit for assessment in RE is new – we are at the early stages of this informing our assessment practices
- This is how we have been measuring progress thus far...
- Moderation and evaluation looks like this...



Assessment and CSI

RE1

- how well pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills as measured against the learning required by The Religious Education Directory.
- the extent to which all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, make progress when measured against the planned curriculum by knowing more, remembering more and doing more, including any variations between age phases and year groups.
- the extent to which pupils are developing as religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- how skilled pupils are in assessing their own learning and taking the next steps in learning.
- how good pupil attainment in religious education is when compared against relevant diocesan or national benchmarks.

Assessment and CSI

RE2

- the extent to which teachers' expertise and commitment to religious education inspires pupils and builds their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- the extent to which lesson planning is linked to a current assessment of pupils' prior learning and is responsive and adapted so that it consolidates, builds and extends learning for all pupils.
- how effectively questioning is used in lessons to identify prior learning, to deepen understanding and to assess new learning and how well teachers respond to the gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills revealed by incisive questioning.
- how effectively feedback ensures that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, including how well teachers use appropriate praise for effort to motivate pupils in their learning.
- how well teachers understand the contributions religious education makes to moral and spiritual development and the amount and quality of time set aside to allow for personal and spiritual reflection in the classroom.

Assessment and CSI

RE3

- how well the sequencing of learning in the planned curriculum secures progress, and how coherent it is within and between different age phases.
- the extent to which the planned curriculum ensures that all pupils are able to make progress in their learning.