

Appendix N

Concepts in RE

In religious education progress is more than the accumulation of information about religions: it concerns the development of conceptual understanding, skills and attitudes.

Concepts

It is central to effective planning and teaching in RE to be able to identify the key idea or concept behind any particular topic or study unit, and work out effective ways of exploring this with pupils so that they not only grasp the key concept but also can relate to it in their own lives.

In RE there are two main types of concept:

1. **General concepts** associated with human experience and the search for meaning and purpose such as commitment, celebration, joy, sadness, goodness, evil, forgiveness, peace, equality and responsibility. These are central to any area of the curriculum addressing the spiritual development of pupils.
2. **Religious concepts:** these fall into two categories
 - a) concepts which are common to most or all major belief systems such as God, ritual, scripture, festival, prayer, worship, myth and symbol;
 - b) concepts which are distinctive of particular religions, examples of which are:

Christianity:	incarnation, salvation, resurrection, sin
Buddhism:	rebirth, karma, mindfulness
Hinduism:	ahimsa, moksha, dharma, samsara
Islam:	tawhid, ummah, ihsan, iman
Judaism:	covenant, mitzvoth, shalom, tzedekah
Sikhism:	khalsa, sewa, guru, Sat Nam

Developing conceptual understanding

Religious education is necessarily concerned with the development of conceptual understanding. Many of the important concepts are identified in the programmes of study for each key stage. In broad terms, the general concepts can be explored in ways that make a connection with pupils' own experiences and understanding. The religious concepts can then be used to explore how religions in general, and specific religions in particular, understand and address the general concepts.

For example, a study of evil and suffering may lead to examining beliefs about God, and then into a focus on sin and salvation, or karma and samsara.

