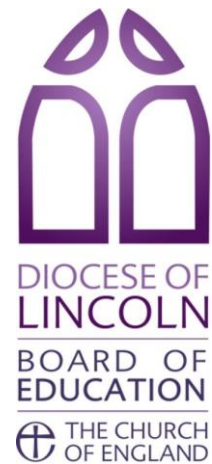


## **Assessing Pupil Progress and Attainment in RE**

Assessment is a core mechanism of ensuring pupils are making progress in their learning; it also enables teachers to reflect on the impact of teaching and learning. Regular assessment is important as it enables teaching to be adapted where necessary to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to '[powerful knowledge](#)' through the curriculum, as well as making sure that pupils are developing the skills that will empower them to access their next stage of learning. Assessment can be formative and summative and can incorporate a wide range of evidence.



This document offers some advice and guidance about assessing pupil progress and attainment in RE. More information about assessment generally can be found [here](#). More information about assessing RE specifically can be found [here](#).

### **Curriculum Design: Planning for Progression**

One of the most important ways in which you can ensure pupils make progress is to design a curriculum that builds in progression. One key way of assessing whether pupils make progress is to ascertain that they *can* make progress. This means reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it focuses on developing core knowledge and key skills for the subject area, and that pupils have plenty of opportunities to deepen and broaden their prior learning over time. You can find out more about how to do this [here](#).

### **Setting Expectations: Assessment and Equity**

Before you are in a position to assess pupil progress and/or attainment, it is necessary to understand what progress or attainment actually looks like at each phase of learning. There are no national benchmarks for progress and attainment in RE, nor are there any specific expectations set down in the Lincolnshire agreed syllabus for RE. You can find end-of-phase expectations [here](#); these are based on the Balanced RE approach to RE curriculum and they focus on the disciplinary knowledge and skills associated with RE. You can find out more about Balanced RE [here](#). Once you know what progress and attainment looks like, it is important to consider what scaffolding needs to be put in place through RE teaching and learning to ensure that *all* pupils can meet these expectations.

### Frequency of Assessment: How Much is Too Much?

As the old phrase has it, “weighing the pig more often doesn’t make it fatter”. It is important that pupils are given enough time to make progress before we carry out assessment. To put this in context, RE should receive a minimum of 5% curriculum time. This equates to between 36 and 45 hours per year. Pupils receive roughly the same amount of input in one half-term of English. It is unlikely that we would carry out a major summative assessment of pupil progress or attainment in English after one half term, so it doesn’t make sense to carry out multiple summative assessments in RE over the course of a single academic year. If we do this, we are simply not giving our pupils sufficient time to actually make progress. For this reason, it makes sense to make a single summative judgement per year in RE. This judgement could be based on a portfolio of evidence gathered over the course of the year, rather than a single summative assessment activity. It also makes sense to assess pupils within the same phase against the same expectations; across a phase, pupils will receive roughly the same amount of input in RE as they receive in a whole term in English, and we wouldn’t assess pupils against entirely different expectations in English within a single academic term.

It is also important to ensure that we are utilising assessment as a mechanism for reviewing the impact of teaching and learning. For this reason, it might be useful to build in regular ‘knowledge checks’ to ensure pupils are acquiring or developing the knowledge we think they should be getting from their RE lessons. These ‘knowledge checks’ could take a variety of forms: multiple choice quizzes, knowledge organisers with gaps that need filling in, concept maps that need the links between pieces of knowledge to be drawn, and so on. It would be useful to carry out ‘knowledge checks’ of this sort at least twice a year to ensure that teaching and learning is having the desired impact.

### Finding the Evidence: What Counts?

Evidence of pupil progress and attainment in RE can come from a wide variety of sources. This does not have to be limited to retrieval or summative test activities like the ‘knowledge checks’ mentioned above.

First and foremost, it is important to remember that the teacher knows their pupils and is in a position to make a professional judgement on any pupil’s progress and/or attainment based on this knowledge. Teachers might find evidence of pupil progress/attainment in pupils’ written work. They might also be able to evidence a pupil’s progress through creative activities, such as artwork, role-play, vlogging, and so on. One of the key areas of teaching and learning in RE is oracy – discussion and conversation should play a significant part in helping teachers assess pupil progress and attainment. This means that we need to consider how to capture this discussion. A teacher might set up a discussion activity in which the pupils are placed in groups and asked to discuss a particular question; each pupil in the group could be given a specific role to fulfil, one of which might be as scribe. This evidence could then be recorded in pupils’ books or in a single portfolio of evidence. If there are additional adults in the classroom during a class debate or discussion, they may be able to

record pupils' comments on post-it notes that could be kept in a portfolio of evidence. Discussion activities could be recorded on tablets or Dictaphones and these files could then be uploaded to a shared drive to be returned to later in the year. The teacher might choose to generate a QR code linked to these files that could be added to a pupil's book or to a portfolio of evidence so that the discussion can be easily returned to at a later date in order to assess progress.

### Using the Evidence: What Happens after Assessment?

The most important thing to do with assessment is to use it to inform next steps. This is the same for teachers as it would be for pupils. Providing pupils with an accurate sense of how they are currently doing and where they are aiming towards ensures that they are clear on the next steps in their learning journey. Assessment also enables teachers to reflect on whether their teaching and learning is working – it encourages self-reflection and should stimulate developing professional practice. If assessment is not helping pupils understand how they are doing and how they can appropriately build on this, it is not working. If assessment is not helping teachers understand whether their teaching and learning is having the desired impact, then it is not working.

### Building Assessment of RE into Teaching Practice

Church of England and Methodist schools are expected to be regularly monitoring pupil progress and attainment in RE (cf. [SIAMS Evaluation Schedule](#), Strand 7) and all schools should monitoring pupils' progress in "knowledge, understanding, and skills towards defined end points" in all subjects on the broad and balanced curriculum (cf. [Ofsted Education Inspection Framework 2019](#)). However, it can take time to build regular assessment of RE into teaching practice, particularly if it has not been carried out before. It might be useful to take a strategic approach to embedding assessment into RE, for example, by initially tracking the progress of a particular group of pupils in order to reflect priorities on the school development plan.

**The Diocesan RE Adviser is able to support teachers and subject leaders of RE in *all* schools and academies in Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. If you would like further support to develop the assessment of RE in your school or academy, please email her at [gillian.georgiou@lincoln.anglican.org](mailto:gillian.georgiou@lincoln.anglican.org).**

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