



APPRECIATING DIFFERENT BELIEFS

**Identifying needs and strengths in
nurturing tolerance in school**

Self-evaluation toolkit

A Self-Evaluation Toolkit

Religion and belief forms one of the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of this toolkit is to provide schools with a means of self-evaluating practice in relation to developing tolerance and understanding of different faiths and beliefs. It supports the requirements of Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework, the duties of the Equality Act and the obligation on schools to promote Fundamental Values. The toolkit has been produced through the Education and Faith project funded by Kirklees Council.

There are four questions to consider:

1. **Knowledge and Understanding:** Do pupils and staff have a good understanding of diverse faiths, beliefs and traditions?
2. **Experience and Engagement:** How are pupils helped to learn from and about people of varying beliefs?
3. **Critical Thinking and Empathy:** How do pupils engage with some of the sensitive and interesting questions that arise from different beliefs and perspectives, and what is the impact of this?
4. **Context and Strategy:** How does the school relate its promotion of the diversity of faith and belief amongst its pupils to a wider strategic perspective?

The self-evaluation should be completed by 'RAG' rating the criteria within each strand, citing specific evidence and providing an analysis of next steps. This will help in the construction of an action plan.

The toolkit can be used in a number of ways:

- By the school as a means of self-evaluating their interfaith work and practices, leading to an action plan
- As a two-way process: for the school to undertake self-evaluation, followed by an assessor visit

The toolkit may also be used with an external assessor to evaluate the school's provision. This can be linked to a badged award acknowledging the quality of this work. For more details of this or any information about CPD, please contact enquiries@penninelearning.com

Question 1: Knowledge and Understanding

Do pupils and staff have a good understanding of diverse faiths, beliefs and traditions?

Aspect	R	A	G	Evidence	Next Steps
There is a comprehensive RE curriculum in place which enables pupils to learn about different faiths, beliefs and traditions throughout their school career					
There is clear progression across year groups for pupils to develop their skills and engage with different religious and non-religious faiths and beliefs					
Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils to explore and reflect on a diverse range of views, beliefs and perspectives					
Staff are knowledgeable about/have received training in aspects of diversity, including in relation to faith and belief					

Question 2: Experience and Engagement

How are pupils helped to learn from and about people of varying beliefs?

Aspect	R	A	G	Evidence	Next Steps
Links are made with local faith and community groups and this understanding helps to inform the curriculum provision (curriculum intent)					
<p>The curriculum as a whole, including SMSC development, provides opportunities for pupils to engage with and explore a diverse range of views, beliefs, traditions and perspectives. These might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visitors to school • visits to different places of worship • school linking • opportunities to engage in relevant democratic activities 					
Pupils learn to prepare and present appropriate and incisive questions to people of faith. They appreciate and reflect on religious perspectives but also recognise conflicting views within and between faiths and where such perspectives may be at variance with other human values and beliefs.					

Question 3: Critical Thinking and Empathy

How do pupils engage with some of the sensitive and interesting questions that arise from different beliefs and perspectives, and what is the impact of this?

Aspect	R	A	G	Evidence	Next Steps
The curriculum is designed to promote discussion about sensitive, challenging and interesting questions which relate to different beliefs and perspectives.					
There is a culture of promoting thinking skills, philosophical and open questioning which help pupils to navigate sensitive, challenging and interesting questions. Staff are trained in these skills and these are evident in lessons.					
The school consciously promotes 'safe spaces for dialogue' throughout the school, so that pupils feel safe when discussing sensitive, challenging and interesting questions which arise from different beliefs and perspectives					
There is evidence of an ethos of tolerance, respect and empathy in relation to diversity in faith and belief					

Question 4: Context and Strategy

How does the school relate its promotion of the diversity of faith and belief amongst its pupils to a wider strategic perspective?

Aspect	R	A	G	Evidence	Next Steps
Policies and practices promote tolerance and understanding among parents of issues relating to faith and belief. They enable positive dialogue and pre-empt issues or objections					
There is an understanding and appreciation amongst school staff of how national and global issues, including those relating to different faiths and beliefs, can have an impact on local communities. This is reflected in proactive responses to such issues					
Work around faith and belief reflects a wider ethos of valuing of diversity, equality and dignity					
There is an understanding by school leaders of what the school needs to do to further develop this work					

Some suggested pupil questions for ‘Appreciating Different Beliefs’

Part of self-evaluation should include a conversation with a cross section of pupils. These questions may be helpful in this ‘Pupil Voice’ exercise. You may, of course, think of others...

Your school

What do you most like about this school?

Do people get on well here? What happens if they fall out?

How do you think a new pupil might feel when they come to this school in the middle of a year? Are they made to feel welcome? How? What might the most difficult things be for them?

What have you learnt in school about getting on with people who are different?

If a pupil said something unkind about someone’s family, colour, background or religion in class or the playground, what would happen?

What do you know about the phrase ‘British values?’

Learning about beliefs and cultures

What chances do you get to learn about different faiths and cultures?

Do you ever go on visits to places of worship or maybe other interesting places? What surprised you? What did you learn about the people you met?

Tell me about your RE lessons. What have you learnt about recently? What did you learn about last year?

Which faiths have you explored?

What are your assemblies like? Can you remember a recent one – or one from last year?

Do you ever have visitors to RE lessons or assemblies? What did you learn from them?

Thinking and talking about important things

What chances do you have to ask difficult questions? How do you do this?

Sometimes people have strong and different views. Can you think of topics in RE or other subjects where this happens?

Are you able to express an opinion? Can others express different views. Do pupils listen to each other?

In what ways have you changed your mind or thought differently because of a lesson, assembly or discussion?

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