

RE, Collective Worship and SMSC Ofsted September 2014

Sections from the Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, September 2014 are in black.
Comments by Isobel Short (RE Inspector) are in blue.

The revised Ofsted Handbook (September 2014) has increased the emphasis on SMSC and has produced more detailed guidance in relation to SMSC, Collective Worship and RE.

Definitions for SMSC

Definitions for spiritual, moral, social and cultural are now in the School Inspection Handbook (were in Subsidiary Guidance) and have been revised. Additions are highlighted below.

131. The spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences.

132. The moral development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong, readily apply this understanding in their own lives and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues, and being able to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

133. The social development of pupils is shown by their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

134. The cultural development of pupils is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain

- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity, and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

SMSC, Curriculum, Leadership and Management

The section on curriculum under Leadership and Management has increased emphasis on SMSC with specific references to British values, life in modern Britain, RE and assemblies. Highlighted below.

150. Inspectors see a range of curricula across schools. Schools may develop their own curriculum to respond to the particular needs of their pupils and ensure that they all achieve their potential. Inspectors should verify that good teaching within a broad and balanced curriculum, accompanied by effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is helping to prepare children and young people for life in modern Britain.

152. Inspectors should consider how well leadership and management ensure that the curriculum:

- is broad and balanced, complies with legislation and provides a wide range of subjects, preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life in modern Britain; inspectors should not expect to see a particular range of subjects but should be alert to any unexplained narrowness in the breadth of curriculum being offered by the school
- actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- promotes tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), cultures and lifestyles through the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, including through the extent to which schools engage their pupils in extra-curricular activity and volunteering within their local community
- includes a balanced approach to the pupils' RE that is broadly Christian but, where required, takes account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Britain (see paragraphs 14–18)
- includes a rounded programme of assemblies that help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, providing clear guidance on what is right and what is wrong

SMSC and Governance

The schedule specifies role of governors in relation to developing SMSC particularly around respect, tolerance and making a positive contribution.

165. Inspectors should consider whether governors:

- ensure that they and the school promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), cultures and lifestyles; and support and help, through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community, to prepare children and young people positively for life in modern Britain

RE and Collective Worship

There is a new section in the Handbook on the types of RE Syllabus delivered in different types of schools and how this is inspected. Reference is made to the statutory requirement (Education Act 1996) that RE must include Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain. Please note: Many of the Agreed Syllabus conferences in the region state which religions should be taught at each key stage.

Reference is also made in the Handbook to the legal requirements around Collective Worship – wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

14. If a school (including an academy) is designated as having a denominational religious character, then denominational religious education, school ethos and the content of collective worship are inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (see chart below). The inspectors who conduct **section 48 inspections** are appointed by the school's governing body, or the foundation governors in a foundation school, having consulted with persons prescribed in regulations (normally the appropriate religious authority). The inspectors are normally drawn from the relevant faith group's section 48 inspection service, although not all faiths have their own inspectors organised in this way. Section 48 inspections should be approximately every five years.

15. In schools with a religious character, section 5 inspectors may comment on educational issues such as the contribution of assemblies to pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, or the quality of teaching in any subjects, including religious education (RE). In the case of schools without a religious character or voluntary aided or voluntary controlled/foundation schools, academies that were previously voluntary controlled/foundation schools and free schools that are designated as having a religious character, where RE is being provided in line with the locally agreed syllabus, RE is inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 and the RE syllabus.

Voluntary aided (VA) schools, academies whose predecessor was a VA school, free schools, and entirely new academies	Voluntary controlled (VC)/ foundation schools and academies whose predecessor was a VC/foundation school
Section 5 inspectors do not inspect the content of denominational RE, but may visit the lessons and assemblies to evaluate teaching, spiritual, moral, social, cultural development, etc. They may also inspect any RE that is provided in line with the locally agreed syllabus following a request from parents.	Section 5 inspectors look at RE as part of the curriculum unless RE is provided in line with the designation following a request from parents.
Section 48 inspectors inspect the denominational content of RE, collective worship and the school's denominational ethos.	Section 48 inspectors inspect collective worship and the school's denominational ethos. Where the RE is provided in line with the designation, this will also be inspected by the section 48 inspectors.
Governors are responsible for deciding the content of the RE syllabus in line with the trust deed or designation. They may appoint all teachers on the basis of religious beliefs.	RE should follow the locally agreed syllabus unless parents request a denominational one. Governors may appoint up to 20% of teachers to teach the denominational curriculum.

Schools without a religious character

18. Schools, including academies, that are not defined as having a religious character must conform to the legal requirements for non-faith schools:

- RE in maintained schools (except voluntary aided, those with specific trust requirements and voluntary controlled/foundation schools whose parents request denominational RE) should be based on the locally agreed syllabus established by the local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). RE should reflect the religious traditions in Britain, which are, in the main, Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Britain. It also means that a school or academy without a religious designation must not provide an RE syllabus (or any other) to pupils by means of any catechism or formulary that is distinctive of any particular religious denomination.
- Academies may, but are not required to, follow the locally agreed RE syllabus. Alternatively, they can devise their own syllabus, but it must be in line with the legislation that underpins the locally agreed syllabus as mentioned above. Non-faith academies must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. Inspectors should note any requirements of their funding agreements.
- A school can reflect the religious backgrounds represented in its community in its collective worship and RE, as long as the majority of provision is broadly Christian. Alternatively, the family backgrounds of some or all pupils may lead the headteacher and governing body to conclude that broadly Christian collective worship is not appropriate. The headteacher can apply to the local SACRE to have the broadly Christian requirement disapplied and replaced by collective worship distinctive of another faith. The headteacher should consult the governing body before doing so. Academies should apply to the Secretary of State via the Educational Funding Agency (EFA).

RE Curriculum

Questions to think about

How does your RE curriculum:

- ensure pupils learn about Christianity and other principal religions (be specific – why some religions and not others)?

- develop the British values of mutual respect and tolerance of all faiths and beliefs

- enable students to develop:
 - spiritually

 - morally

 - socially

 - culturally

- help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain

- help pupils build up their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and religion?