



A Utopian Whisper of the next Millennium

In launching the first East Riding Syllabus for RE, John Hull sent a clear, challenging message to teachers.

Speaking of the recognised importance of religious education in other European countries, John explained how he sees RE as a whisper of a future Utopia for Europe, in which the religions will join in partnership to contest the destructive forces of modern life and win back a living soul for Europe.

He went on to describe how RE offers children a wider outlook upon the religious traditions of the world. *“Children studying this subject are introduced to the world of beliefs and values lying beyond the scope of the family, whether the family atmosphere is religious or secular. In addition, religious education offers an examination of the values and practices of contemporary life - the ethics, the standards of living, without which life would become even more of a jungle.”*

“The new East Riding Syllabus offers all these things. It offers to develop the pupil into spiritual, moral and cultural maturity. It offers knowledge about the faiths which still inspire the lives and cultures of

millions of people today. It offers freedom from stereotypes and taboos. It offers reason instead of prejudice, awareness instead of dullness. It offers this religious education to all pupils, regardless of their family religious background or secular outlook. It can be taught by any well-informed and experienced teacher who shares its ideals, regardless of any personal faith which the teacher may have.”

“In all these ways, this new syllabus is a kind of Utopian promise for the future of people in Yorkshire and beyond, a whisper of hope for Europe and the world.”

“May the hope represented by the new syllabus be realised in the classroom, as the community gives its support to this vital educational enterprise.”

John’s book *Utopian Whispers: Moral, Religious and Spiritual Values in Schools* (1998) is published by RMEP.

Religious Education and Citizenship

Some Religious Education teachers are concerned that Citizenship may impinge on RE in curriculum time and content. But Citizenship may be a means to support the broad concerns of RE, and, indeed, to complement it (particularly in AT1 - Reflection and Response.)

The Government has given assurances that RE will not suffer from the new subject, and it is not expected that Citizenship will be delivered as a discrete subject,

except for some elements at KS3/4. It will be taught through other aspects of the curriculum. So our new RE syllabus could assume importance in a whole ‘new’ area of learning.

John Hull’s comments on the contribution made by the East Riding Syllabus:

It provides the basic essentials for good citizenship - a growing, enquiring young person, actively forming values and commitments in living.

Values and purposes underpinning the school curriculum

Following a joint statement issued by the Church of England Board of Education and the corresponding Catholic Department, QCA published a revised statement on values underpinning the national curriculum.

The rationale for the curriculum is expressed in much more detail. It should develop pupils’ knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of their own and different beliefs and cultures, and how these influence individuals and societies. In reaffirming commitment to the virtues of truth, justice, honesty, trust and a sense of duty, education should reflect enduring values; there is recognition that personal development of pupils, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve.





ER Inset for the new Agreed Syllabus

More than 110 teachers, representing around 70% of East Riding schools, took up the option of a basic introduction to the syllabus. Feedback from these sessions and the launch itself have been very favourable, with more good things to look forward to!

Schemes of work to match the syllabus are due to be published in the Spring and KS1/2 INSET to show teachers how to make the best use of them is planned for March:

- 15th - Bishop Burton
- 16th - Beverley Arms
- 22nd - Manor Court, Carnaby
- 23rd - Goole Inset Centre

All are morning trainings from 09.15 to 12 noon, and should be applied for in the usual way, through June Leech at County Hall.

KS3 schemes will follow by the Summer Term.

Other guidance and training to come include aspects of assessment, recording and reporting, early years and mixed-age classes.

QCA are bringing out their own Schemes of work in all subjects, including RE, next term and again, there will be notes on ICT, SEN and Key Skills, together with an 8 Level Scale for RE! More of that later!!

Meanwhile we are seeking to address the need to familiarise as many teachers as possible with the syllabus, answering queries and addressing problems as they arise. We therefore hope to arrange twilights, cluster and pyramid meetings all over the East Riding. Do contact us if you'd like to host or to be part of such a gathering. The resource bases could be a good place to start.

Other Courses (Jan-July 2000)

CEM

PRIMARY:

- *Exploring God in Religion*
- *Improving Teaching & Learning*
- *KS1 RE: Problems & Possibilities*
- *Quality Collective Worship*
- *An A-Z of RE: Active Learning Strategies*

SECONDARY:

- *A Level RE: Improving Teaching & Learning with the New Specification*
- *An A-Z of RE: Active Learning Strategies*
- *RE, Assessment & Achievement*
- *Learning from Religion*
- *SMSC Development: RE's leading contribution*

RESIDENTIAL (all key stages):

- *Improving Effectiveness in RE*
- *Developing RE: The Role of the Subject Leader*

These are all over the country - for details phone 01332 296655.

SfE (Stands for Education)

- *How to Raise the Standards of Teaching and Learning in GCSE RE and RS*
- *How Improve the Quality of Teaching and Learning in RE Through the Effective Use of ICT*
- *National Expectations and Assessment in RE: How to Plan for Success at KS3 & KS4*

These too are at venues all over the country - details on 0117 983 8800.

The First International Conference on Children's Spirituality

(9 - 12th July 2000, University College, Chichester, West Sussex)

An opportunity for all those involved in research and the development of children and young people's spirituality to meet together and debate within a multi-cultural and international forum.

For further info: 01243 816000

or: www.cwvp.chihe.ac.uk



