

## GATEWAY DOCUMENT 2.3

# Using display to reflect Britain's diverse society

## WHY IS THIS RELEVANT TO *REsilience*?

*REsilience* curriculum issues are by their nature challenging and interesting and the environment in which such issues are discussed is of paramount importance. What is displayed is an important resource for augmenting learning, raising issues and helping students to form attitudes. Display can contribute to the respectful and inclusive ethos of the RE classroom and materials for display are an important learning resource in their own right.

## KEY QUESTIONS

### How can this help teachers and students to increase their understanding of contentious issues?

Displays can make a key contribution to the learning process. Material on contentious issues can be used to show a range of different perspectives and views, to display graphs and text from surveys and interviews carried out by students, to make links through the use of media resources and to provide the starting point for interactive tasks.

The broad context for *REsilience* and RE generally is the culturally and religiously diverse society in which we live. Displays can provide a reminder and illustration of this context.

- Informative posters are available from national publishers. These focus on specific religions, beliefs and issues and are probably the most widely used of all display resources.
- Educationally valuable information about local religious and non-religious belief groups is less readily available. Some of the best local resources are the result of students' activities, which can then be used as a resource for other classes.
- Space for temporary displays can be used to support work on a particular topic or issue.
- Displays relating to a specific religion or non-religious belief may include key terms in the home language and alphabet as well as English (where relevant).
- Displays may also include artefacts/objects (commercially produced examples as well as those made by students) and be interactive.

## What classroom challenges might arise in RE?

The main challenge is that a teacher's workload may be such that maintaining an attractive, regularly updated and high quality set of displays is difficult to achieve. There may be additional practical difficulties such as the lack of a dedicated RE room, several teachers sharing the use of a room, a teacher taking the same class in different rooms during the week or inadequate display space on the walls.

Another consideration is whether displays adequately reflect Britain's diverse society in terms of gender, ethnicity, religion/belief and age.

Consideration must be given to sensitivities with regard to items displayed, for example religious artefacts and copies of religious texts should not be displayed where they can be carelessly handled or located in a setting that might cause offence. Similarly, Judaism and Islam have teachings that prohibit the display of images, particularly paintings or sculptures, of animals and particularly of humans, although individuals will vary enormously in how strictly they observe these prohibitions. Teachers may wish to consult or check (e.g. with a local RE adviser or SACRE member) about potential points of sensitivity.

## How can teachers address such challenges?

Teachers could consider the following points:

- Whether use of display material is central to lesson/unit planning and tasks are set that require students to use display materials as resources.
- Display is more likely to engage the interest of many passing readers in corridors and spaces beyond the RE classroom if it includes expression of views on contentious issues, whether these are the views of students themselves, or material they have gathered through interviews or surveys, or appropriately presented information from the media.
- Practical considerations might include:
  - a flexible approach which includes a space for temporary exhibitions;
  - how the job of changing display materials is shared (teachers, teaching assistants, students);
  - whether it is possible that specific rooms could be used for a key stage rather than a teacher (this will only be effective if the RE rooms are close to one another.) This has the advantage of making displays relevant to the specific needs of students following e.g. GCSE courses and A' Level courses;
  - it may be possible to work cooperatively with another school department on a project that will generate display material – obvious candidates here are the art department, the music department, the English department, the drama department or the ICT department; often more difficult, but possible and rewarding, is joint work with the science department.

## NEXT STEPS

### Signposts for further reading

Andrew-Power, K. and Gormley, C. (2009) *Display for learning*. London. Continuum International.

Jackson, R (2010) *Research report on resources for religious education*, Warwick University (identifies problem of lack of diversity and quality of resources in relation to some religious traditions).

### Signposts for further resources

Commercially produced posters are available from several well-known suppliers of religious artefacts. However, the most effective display materials will often be those produced by teachers and students relating to their current work.

Jackson, R. (ed) (2010) *Materials used to teach about World Religions in Schools in England*. Research Report DCSF-RR197 available at

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-RB197>

### Signposts for further action

- Display offers the RE department an opportunity to contribute to the school ethos, particularly with respect to matters such as social integration. Outside and beyond RE rooms, corridors, entrance and dining halls and other public areas can be used to display thought provoking messages under inviting banners such as 'Did you know...?' or 'Your opinion matters'. These have the potential to raise awareness of community issues among students of all ages.
- The school may wish to establish a whole school policy on the use of displays, including their contribution to whole school issues.
- Displays of photographs of student activities, trips, performances and shared events will allow the full diversity of the school community to be reflected.