Unit

6 Developing curricular target setting in religious education

Following the training in the generic unit *Curricular target setting*, it is important to consider how the key messages of the training apply to religious education. As part of the whole-school focus on Assessment for learning, the following subject development material is intended to help you consider the key messages of the training unit and identify any areas requiring development in your department.

The following is a brief summary of the training unit.

Objectives

- To define what is meant by curricular target setting.

- To explain and exemplify the principles of curricular target setting.

- To outline the process of setting curricular targets.

Key messages

- A curricular target expresses in words, supported by data, a specific aspect of the curriculum as a focus for improvement. It may be focused by numeric outcomes. It is identified from a range of sources of evidence as an area of weakness in pupils' learning.
  Curricular targets can be:
  – for a whole class, a group of pupils, an individual pupil
  – long-term (e.g. term or year), medium-term (e.g. few weeks), short-term (e.g. few lessons).

- The target should detail specific cohorts, classes or groups of pupils who need more effective provision, intervention, support or monitoring in order to make better progress.

- It will need to be matched to year groups and classes to ensure progression towards achieving the planned improvement. This is known as a layered curricular target.

- Teaching objectives in medium-term plans or schemes of work will need to directly address the curricular targets. This will be further refined in learning objectives within lessons to ensure the target is being addressed. A target may be revisited several times in a unit, in a year and across the key stage to ensure there is progression towards the target.

- Curricular targets are established through an analysis of available information about what has and has not been learned. An appropriate target ensures that pupils' prior attainment and achievements are built on throughout the key stage. It will often focus teaching on areas of underperformance, supporting improved learning outcomes for underachieving groups of pupils.

- Curricular targets are established through a process of:
  – information gathering
  – information analysis
  – identification of issues
  – planned actions and related success criteria.

The following material builds on the tasks outlined in the 'Ready for more?' section of the *Curricular target setting* training unit and it is intended for all those who teach religious education.

Reviewing existing practice in curricular target setting

The table on page 3 provides a tool for the department to self-review current practice and to help identify an appropriate starting point.

As a department, agree and highlight the statements below that best reflect the practice of the whole department. At the bottom of each column is a reference to the tasks that will support your current practice and provide the appropriate material to develop from this point.

Having completed this review you should read 'Making effective use of the subject development material' on page 4.

	Focusing	**Developing**	**Establishing**	**Enhancing**
Teachers	The subject leader has identified that: • although teachers are provided with prior attainment data and targets for individual pupils expressed as expected levels, this is rarely used to inform curricular targets • target setting is left mainly to individual teachers with their own classes • there is little or no link made between the numeric data and the teaching and learning objectives needed to achieve them.	Assessment data (information) in the subject is used to help identify the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers within a department have begun to identify and use curricular targets to focus their teaching on areas of underperformance and raise standards. However, this is not yet coordinated across the department. Some identification of gaps in pupils' learning is used to inform short-term planning.	Assessment data (information) is gathered and analysed on a regular basis. It is used to track progress and identify next steps for individuals and groups of pupils. At departmental level, some planning is informed through a review and identification of weaknesses in pupils' learning. Teaching objectives are derived from this and gaps in pupils' learning are addressed through this. Target setting is more established in some year groups or key stages than others.	There is a rigorous target-setting process in place as part of school and departmental improvement planning. Curricular targets are established through a process of information gathering, analysis, and identification of issues. This leads to planned actions and related success criteria. Pupil level data and complementary qualitative information is used on a regular basis in all year groups to identify individuals and groups of pupils with specific learning gaps. These are expressed as subject-specific curricular targets and are addressed in planning through focused learning objectives.
Pupils	The subject leader has identified that: • pupils typically know their numeric targets expressed in terms of levels • pupils make little link between these targets and the feedback about their work.	Some pupils are aware of the most immediate target to address in their subject work.	In many instances, pupils are aware of their targets in the subject that will help them to improve their achievement in the subject. Pupils are aware of the linkage between the objectives for the lesson and the opportunity for them to address their targets.	Pupils take an active part in the target-setting and target-getting process. They understand their targets in terms of what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve their work.
	Start with Task 6A	Start with Task 6A	Start with Task 6B	Start with Task 6B

Making effective use of the subject development material

The tasks you have been referred to are intended to support the development or extension of curricular targets in religious education and provide guidance on how to embed this into regular practice in religious education lessons.

The results of the self-review will have suggested the appropriate task(s) that will support your department's development needs.

To make best use of the supporting material the following sequence will be helpful.

1 Read the task and the supporting exemplification.

This describes how a department has approached the task and worked through each of its stages. It is given as an *example* of how the task might be addressed. It is not intended that you follow this approach, which is given as a guide to the process that will support improvements in your subject.

2 Identify what the department did and the impact it had on pupils.

Discuss as a team the example provided and establish the key areas that helped to develop this practice and the impact it had on pupils. It will be helpful to identify the changes in teachers' practice and how these impacted on pupils' learning.

3 Agree and plan the actions that will develop your practice.

As a department, agree how you intend to approach this task. Clarify what you are focusing on and why. The example given will act as a guide, but be specific about which classes, which lessons and which aspects of the curriculum will be your points of focus.

4 Identify when and how you will evaluate its impact on pupils.

The purpose of focusing on this is to improve pupils' achievement and attainment in religious education. You will need to be clear on what has helped pupils to learn more effectively in your subject. Part of this will be how your practice has adapted to allow this. You should jointly identify what has worked well and which areas require further attention.

5 Having evaluated these strategies, consider what steps are required to embed this practice.

You will need to undertake an honest evaluation of what you have tried and the impact it has had on your teaching and on pupils' learning. One outcome might be that you need to spend longer on improving this area or you may be in a position to consider the next task.

Other departments in the school will have been focusing on this area and you should find out about the progress they have made.

You may find that some teachers in the department will require further time to develop and consolidate new practice, while others will be ready to progress further through the tasks in this area (while continuing to support their colleagues). Practice across a department will need to be consolidated before focusing on a new area of Assessment for learning.

The subject development tasks

Task 6A

Identify a curricular target from the outcomes of an end of unit or end of year assessment.

For core subjects you may wish to refer to the relevant QCA *Implications for teaching and learning* document to stimulate discussion and inform relevant curricular targets for your subject.

Use **handouts 6.4** and **6.5** (see **appendices 6A.1** and **6A.2**) in the generic unit to assist in layering the target for each year group.

Consider how these targets might need to be modified for the most and least able in the year group, while remaining challenging for all groups of pupils.

Task 6B

In pairs, carry out a scrutiny of pupils' work from a particular topic in a year group.

Identify areas of weakness in pupils' understanding and compare these outcomes with the *intended* learning outcomes.

Agree a relevant curricular target that matches this evidence and plan the teaching necessary to address it.

Evaluate the impact of this focus on pupils' learning.

The following pages provide exemplification of each task.

Task 6A

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Use handouts 6.4 and 6.5 (see appendices 6A.1 and 6A.2) in the generic unit to assist in layering the target for each year group.

Consider how these targets might need to be modified for the most and least able in the year group, while remaining challenging for all groups of pupils.

Context

The department had undertaken an end of unit assessment on the impact of Sikh beliefs on the everyday lives of members of the Sikh religion. Pupils were asked to relate the teachings of Guru Nanak and the Guru Granth Sahib about equality to the practices seen in the Gurdwara. They were given relevant extracts from the Guru Granth Sahib and examples from the life of Guru Nanak and asked to show how these are demonstrated in practice in the life of the Sikh community.

From a scrutiny of pupils' oral and written responses to this assessment task, it was evident that most pupils were able to describe Sikh practices relating to equality such as equal sharing of tasks between men and women, the emphasis on hospitality and providing food for strangers without payment. However, teachers identified that a significant proportion of pupils were less able to link the teachings of Guru Nanak and the teachings of the sacred text to practice in the Gurdwara.

Having identified this area for development, the department also recognised that the pupil's inability to make the link between belief and practice, which is a key feature of the study of religion, was not specific to the teaching of Sikhism but was a broader issue across the Key Stage 3 RE curriculum.

Evidence from a sample of pupils' work carried out earlier in the year as part of the department's annual review process, reinforced the department's view that this was an appropriate area to be targeting in Years 7, 8 and 9.

Process

Having undertaken this analysis the department established the following curricular target.

All pupils to improve their skills in identifying and explaining the connections between beliefs and practices in the religion(s) they are studying.

In addition to the qualitative evidence that the department intended to gather to measure the impact on pupils' learning outcomes, they established an associated numerical target linked to attainment.

In RE, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the impact of belief on practices and lifestyles in religion (AT1) will improve from 65% to 75% of pupils attaining level 5 and above by the end of Key Stage 3 in July 2006.

As the department recognised this as an issue for their Key Stage 3 curriculum, having established an overall target for the key stage they considered its implications for each year group within the key stage. They broke down the overall curricular target for the key stage and established the appropriate layers for each year group that would help to stage this.

They did this by referring to their locally agreed syllabus. The department focused on the descriptions of levels 4 to 7 for AT1 to help formulate the target for each year group.

In Year 7, teachers provide planned opportunities for pupils to make and explore the links between belief and practice and to explain orally and in writing in a variety of ways.	**In Year 8**, teachers focus on consolidating pupils' understanding of the belief–practice connection and providing opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding in new contexts.	**In Year 9**, pupils are confident and able to apply their previous knowledge and understanding to their study of religion, making the connection between beliefs and practices, explaining causal links and giving a range of examples from the faiths they have studied using relevant terminology.

Examples of layering a curricular target

Key Stage 3 Curricular target		
All pupils to improve their skills in identifying and explaining the connections between beliefs and practices in the religion(s) they are studying.		
Year group target (taken from Year 9)	**Class target (for a specific Year 9 class)**	**Group/pupil target in Year 9 class**
Pupils are confident and able to apply their previous knowledge and understanding to their study of religion, making the connection between beliefs and practices, explaining causal links and giving a range of examples from the faiths they have studied using relevant terminology.	Pupils know the key beliefs in Sikhism and are able to make connections between beliefs and actions for individuals and communities and explain impact.	Pupils know the most important beliefs in Sikhism and can explain how they make a difference to the way Sikhs live their lives.

Evaluation

The department recognised that while the process for identifying targets for year groups was valid and would enable them to target specific curriculum weaknesses, it was important to provide opportunities within the tasks for pupils to achieve at the higher levels. For example, pupils working at level 7 could be given opportunities to relate beliefs and practices to their historical and cultural contexts, and to explore different forms of religious expression. Low-attaining pupils will be able to identify some ways of belonging to religions.

The teachers were keen not to lower the aspirations in the curricular targets set for year groups and classes, but recognised the need to ensure that the tasks set allowed for the full range of outcomes.

Task 6B

In pairs, carry out a scrutiny of pupils' work from a particular topic in a year group.

Identify areas of weakness in pupils' understanding and compare these outcomes with the *intended* learning outcomes.

Agree a relevant curricular target that matches this evidence and plan the teaching necessary to address it.

Evaluate the impact of this focus on pupils' learning.

Context

As part of their annual review of their scheme of work and their evaluation of their effectiveness, the RE department planned to use a work sampling activity. This was part of wider, school-based self-evaluation activities that departments were encouraged to undertake. This activity would inform their departmental action plan for Key Stage 3.

Process

Teachers looked at a representative sample of pupils' work from all classes in Year 9. The scrutiny focused in particular on those pupils who were demonstrating the ability to work at level 5, but mostly at level 4, and those pupils who demonstrated the ability to work at level 6, but achieved mainly at level 5. These levels were those defined by QCA in the non-statutory national expectations in RE.

The task given to the Year 9 pupils was to identify a number of Sikh artefacts from pictures and to explain what each of them stands for. They were then asked to write an article for a teenage magazine about how wearing a religious symbol could help a young Sikh in their faith and in what ways it could be difficult for them. Pupils were asked to include their personal perspective on showing openly their allegiance or support for something. This would demonstrate attainment at level 5 in AT2.

Six golden rules for effective work sampling

- Begin with a clear and explicit focus, hypothesis or lead question.

- Establish who is to be responsible for the organisation, management, coordination and evaluative summarising of the activity.

- Prepare a guiding aide-memoire that provides a framework for enquiry.

- Select a sample of pupils' work, based on existing knowledge, which will provide the best evidence within the constraints of time available.

- Discuss and agree the main features that emerge from the work seen.

- Draw up a practicable action plan that can be implemented by subject departments, and track its impact by re-sampling pupils over time.

The pupils' work was analysed in terms of their ability to go beyond simply describing the artefacts and saying how they showed belonging in Sikhism (AT1, level 4) to making the link between faith and practice and explaining the significance to Sikhs of artefacts in their faith (AT1, level 5).

The intended outcomes for all pupils were to:
- identify a number of Sikh artefacts and symbols
- explain the meanings of artefacts and symbols in Sikhism
- explain how helpful religious symbols can be to a believer
- evaluate the significance to Sikhs of artefacts in their faith.

For the most able pupils an additional intended learning outcome was:
- to extend the article to make links between the experience of Sikhs and the experience of young people in other faiths in wearing outward signs of their religion (AT1, level 6).

Evaluation

Scrutiny of the pupils' completed work revealed that almost all pupils were able to identify the Sikh artefacts and symbols correctly and could explain their meanings (level 4). However, the magazine articles showed that, although they were able to suggest possible advantages and disadvantages of showing outward signs of belonging to Sikhism, most pupils were unable to evaluate the significance to a believer and the impact that it was likely to have on their life (level 5).

Pupils' ability to move beyond knowledge and understanding to be able to analyse and evaluate the impact of beliefs on practice was limited. Those pupils who attempted to draw on examples from other faiths they had studied chose examples from Christianity, such as the wearing of a cross. They showed limited ability to make deeper connections between faith and practice between religions; this would be evidence of working at level 6.

Most pupils were able to give examples from their own experience of showing belonging – e.g. to sports teams or uniformed groups – but were not able to explain the significance in any depth.

As a result of this the department agreed the following curricular targets:

Pupils should be able to apply their knowledge and understanding of features of religious life in order to come to a deeper understanding of the differences that these make to the lives of individuals and communities.

Pupils should be able to draw on their understanding of religious beliefs and practices to inform their responses to questions of identity and experience.

To address these targets, the department agreed to focus their teaching on AT1 'Practices and lifestyles', level 5, and AT2 'Identity and experience', level 5.

The department agreed to focus teaching on these targets, particularly through the use of questions that required pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding. The department would also provide regular, planned opportunities for pupils to engage in and develop the skills of empathy,

evaluation, analysis, synthesis and reflection. It was agreed that Bloom's taxonomy would be used as a basis for this, and that a department INSET session on planning questions and setting tasks in RE in relation to the taxonomy was required. To address this need the head of department led an INSET session using the Foundation subjects' training module *Questioning*.

Having focused on this area in their Year 9 teaching for two terms, the department considered the implications of this for the teaching in Years 7 and 8 to ensure there was planned progression within and across the key stage.

Handout 6.4 – Principles for layering curricular targets

Group or pupil target

- Generally applicable to all pupils in a class but may be modified for specific groups

- Can be discussed explicitly with pupils, particularly during the plenary where pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and what they need to do next

Term 1 target for Class 8AB

- Drawn from the termly objectives of the subject framework or the learning objectives in a scheme of work incorporated into teachers' planning

- May be given a particular emphasis in teachers' medium-term plans (i.e. more time to cover the objective, specific opportunities to apply this)

Year group target

- How a specific year group contributes to the overall key stage target. There may be a target for each year group to ensure progression across the key stage. This reinforces that all teachers across the key stage contribute towards the achievement of the target

- This can be monitored over the course of the year, e.g. 'How many pupils in the cohort can do this at the start of the year/at the midpoint/at the end of the year?

Key Stage 3 curricular target

- Usually arrived at by audit, data analysis, scrutiny of pupils' scripts or work samples – an overall area of weakness which needs to be targeted

- Can be openly identified and discussed with pupils as an aspect of work, which everyone will be particularly focusing on this year

Handout 6.5 – Examples of layering a curricular target

Subject	Key stage target	Year group target	Class target	Group/pupil target
Science	Pupils need to make progress in their investigative skills.	In an investigation pupils are able to identify the key variables that they can and cannot control.	Pupils can use the science department's planning posters to plan their own investigations. (Year 8)	I can plan my own investigation and say what I will change, what I will measure and what I think will happen.
MFL	Promote pupils' independence as language learners.	In spoken work pupils can sustain short unscripted discussions and exchanges building on scripted (Year 8) supported work started in Year 7.	Pupils can read aloud from a simple written text of familiar language, using correct pronunciation and expression.	I can understand, and speak some simple sentences describing what I have done and what I'm going to do.
English	Ensure that pupils can use paragraphs appropriately.	When writing, pupils will use topic sentences to begin their paragraphs. (Year 8)	Pupils can explore and compare different methods of grouping sentences into paragraphs of continuous text that are clearly focused and well-developed, e.g. by chronology, comparison or through adding exemplification.	I can write a paragraph using a topic sentence and group all the following points, so they are clear and support the topic sentence.
Mathematics	Pupils should be able to use proportional reasoning to solve a problem, choosing the correct numbers to take as 100%, or as a whole.	Pupils will be able to use the unitary method to solve simple word problems involving ratio and direct proportion.	Pupils will consolidate understanding of the relationship between ratio and proportion.	I can identify when proportional reasoning is needed to solve a problem.
Geography	Pupils need to improve the extent to which they can describe and explain the physical and human features contributing to the distinctive character of places.	In written work, pupils should be able to explain how (Year 7) physical processes change a landscape.	Pupils can explain the development of a landscape as a series of sequential events and processes.	I can explain how landscapes are changed by putting events in order.
Music	Practise, rehearse and give performances demonstrating awareness of different parts, the contribution of the different group members and the audience and venue.	Perform significant parts from memory and from notations with awareness of their own contribution such as leading others, taking a solo part and/or providing rhythmic support.	Within a small group, pupils can perform a standard 12-bar blues from memory using internalised rhythm in time with others in the group.	I can perform a standard 12-bar blues from memory and keep in time with the other people in my group.
ICT	Improve pupils' visual literacy, i.e. their ability to select, acquire, extract, deploy information from a variety of visual resources.	In communicating information, make appropriate use of different categories of still imagery, in particular, clip art and photographic quality images.	Pupils can make a presentation fit for audience and purpose, sequenced appropriately, and deploying appropriate clip art and photographic images from a limited collection.	I can make a presentation describing what makes a website good, choosing clip art and detailed images to make a point.