

Books

3.3

Checklist to support schools in addressing the question, 'Are we confident that the books on religion/s and beliefs that we use give a fair representation of them?'

The following checklist (based on what the reviewers, academics and faith experts said in the Warwick Report) can be used when considering the quality of a particular book or books that you are using, or want to use, in RE. Though the term 'religion' is used below, the general questions asked would also apply to non-religious belief systems.

General questions that might be asked of any book on religion/s

- Is a rich and positive picture presented of religion as having a place in British society as well as in the wider world?
- Is there reference to the relationship between religions?
- Are unhelpful stereotypes avoided (e.g. that all Muslims are of south-east Asian origin, that only men have leadership roles)?
- Is there sufficient depth so as to avoid oversimplification and generalisation?
- Is there a broad understanding rather than an overemphasis on certain aspects of experience?
- Is there sufficient material about underlying approaches to life and the world (beliefs, attitudes, values)?
- Is diversity both within and between different religious traditions recognised?
- Are there references to how religion is involved in promoting the wellbeing of individuals as well as the good of society in general?
- Are assumptions made about practice, choice and identity (e.g. that all Jews are 'religious' Jews) avoided?

Books

3.3 (Continued)

In addition, the following specific questions might be asked of each of the principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain

Buddhism (Warwick Report, p.111)

- Is there a broad view of the whole Buddhist community (i.e. not an overconcentration on the monastic tradition)?
- Do images and text avoid presenting the tradition as 'exotic' and 'foreign'?
- Is there reference to both white British and migrant Buddhist communities?

Christianity (Warwick Report, p.111)

- In the language used, is the assumption that readers come from a Christian background avoided?
- Are some of the modern-day groups that might be found in school classes (e.g. evangelical tradition) addressed?
- As well as reference to 'externals' (festivals, buildings, etc), is there sufficient about Christian core beliefs (e.g. about the nature and role of Jesus)?

Hinduism (Warwick Report, p.110)

- Is there an assumption that Hinduism is too difficult to study?
- Is there recognition of the great diversity within Hinduism?
- Is the text sufficiently accurate and detailed?

Islam (Warwick Report, p.110)

- Is there sufficient attention given to the public image of Islam?
- Is there sufficient material about the beliefs and values that lie behind the external expressions of the religion?

Judaism (Warwick Report, p.111)

- Is the assumption that Judaism was 'merely' a forerunner to Christianity avoided?
- Is the rich tradition of Jewish thought over the last 2000 years drawn upon?
- Do visual images avoid presenting unhelpful stereotypes (e.g. that all Jews are Orthodox)?

Sikhism (Warwick Report, p.111)

- Is there sufficient reference to the beliefs and values that lie behind the external expressions of the religion?
- Is there reference to Sikh beliefs about how human life might be transformed?