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The impact of different approaches to religious education on the spiritual and moral attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils

Jennings, Penny

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THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ON

THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL ATTITUDES OF

YEAR NINE AND YEAR TEN PUPILS

by

PENNY JENNINGS

of

UNIVERSITY OF WALES, BANGOR

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Preface

The religious education clauses of the 1988 Education Reform Act prompted much debate and resulted in the production of a number of government-sponsored documents advising schools on how to interpret and implement the clauses. The present research sets out to discover the impact of government initiatives on secondary school religious education.

My hope is that the findings from this research may stimulate further consideration of ways in which schools might be helped in their task of promoting their pupils' spiritual and moral development.

I declare that this dissertation is not, in whole or in part, substantially the same as any that I have submitted for a degree or other qualification at any other university and that it is the result of my own research.

Penny Jennings
University of Wales, Bangor

Introduction

Rationale

The present research study took place in the mid-1990s. Media accounts of British life in the 1990s presented a picture of a nation that appeared to have abandoned many of its traditional moral values. The early years of the decade saw growing concern at the increase in violent crime and the general decline in moral standards. John Patten, Education Secretary 1992-1994, was described as beginning his term of office with 'a passionate condemnation of the godlessness of society and an appeal for a return to belief in good and evil' (*Daily Telegraph* 17 April 1992). He called upon the churches to teach 'the fundamental lessons of redemption and damnation, good and evil, right and wrong', and to exhort parents and children alike in such matters.

In February 1993 concern for the moral standards of the nation's children came sharply to the forefront of public attention with the murder of a two-year-old child by two ten-year-old boys. A report on a Conservative Party meeting (*Times* 6 March 1993) referred to a 'national debate about the moral values of young people, particularly in the wake of the James Bulger murder'. The article stated that Conservative backbenchers and school inspectors criticised religious education syllabuses as being too vague and not reflecting the mainly Christian tradition of the country. John Patten referred to the 'sidelining' of religious education in many schools, and called for religious education to play a major role in teaching children the difference between right and wrong. He stated that he would be conferring with leaders of the Christian churches and other faiths to decide how best to use religious education to improve the moral values of the nation's children.

In a subsequent article in the *Daily Telegraph* (11 March 1993) David Pascall, then chairman of the National Curriculum Council, concurred with Patten's views. Pascall stated that religious education was 'too often marginalised in our schools'. The main purpose of religious education was, he said, 'to do with addressing the spiritual and moral needs of young people'. The quality of the subject was to be improved, 'in order to contribute to the spiritual development of pupils and a harmonious and tolerant society'. An article in the *Church of England Newspaper*

(12 March 1993) claimed that all religious education syllabuses were failing to meet the 'in the main Christian' requirement of the 1988 Education Reform Act, and hence failing to teach Christian moral values. Further press articles continued to link moral values with spiritual, and specifically Christian, values, and referred to forthcoming government initiatives to ensure that education, and in particular religious education, would play a vital part in promoting such values (*Times* 22 March 1993, 7 April 1993, 29 April 1993, *Church of England Newspaper* 15 October 1993). It thus became clear that the nation's schools, rather than parents or the church, were to take the major responsibility for improving the nation's moral values.

Calls for education to contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development were not new. The 1944 Education Act (section 7) had required each local education authority to provide an education that would 'contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community'. The 1988 Education Reform Act (section 1.2a) had repeated the requirement, adding 'cultural' to the list of the types of 'development', but placing the responsibility for educational provision on schools, who were to 'promote' these various types of development. Attention was drawn to these different areas of development when the 1992 Education (Schools) Act required Her Majesty's Inspectorate in England (section 2.d) and in Wales (section 6.d) to report on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These aspects of pupils' development were now to be included in the inspection processes.

Government attention subsequently focused particularly on pupils' spiritual and moral development. A number of government-sponsored documents attempted to define spiritual and moral development (see, for example, National Curriculum Council 1993a, Office for Standards in Education 1994) and government called for religious education and collective worship to play a major, though not exclusive, role in promoting these particular aspects of pupils' development (Department for Education 1994). The present research therefore aims to discover the responses of religious educators to legal requirements and government recommendations and seeks to assess the impact of these responses upon pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Research objectives

In order to assess the contribution of the religious education of the mid-1990s to pupils' spiritual and moral development, the research aims first to identify and analyse different approaches to religious education. Secondly it will examine definitions of 'spiritual development' and 'moral development', with a view to providing measures of the same. Thirdly, it will review research in religious education and in spiritual and moral attitudes, with the aim of selecting the research methods best suited to the present study. Fourthly, by presenting empirical evidence of teachers' responses to government demands, it aims to categorise schools according to their different approaches to religious education. Fifthly, it aims to compare the impact of different approaches to religious education on various aspects of pupils' spiritual and moral development. Finally, it aims to use the research findings to make recommendations for religious education and for further research.

Dissertation overview

Part one of the dissertation addresses the research question from conceptual perspectives. Chapter one seeks to describe and evaluate the religious education of the mid-1990s, the time of the research. In order to understand the religious education of that era, the research traces the history of the development of religious education in Britain, outlining the major influences on the development of different approaches, and discussing their strengths and weaknesses. From a review of the relevant literature the research identifies eight different approaches to religious education. The first two of the eight approaches relate to provision for religious education, the next two to lesson content, and the remainder to teaching methodology.

Secondly, the dissertation addresses the conceptual issue of defining the terms 'spiritual development' and 'moral development'. Chapter two reviews literature relating to 'spiritual development', discusses its implications for religious education, and suggests the kinds of responses that might indicate spiritual development. Chapter three reviews literature relating to 'moral development', discusses its implications for religious education, and suggests the kinds of responses that might indicate moral development.

Since government documents call for religious education to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development yet understand 'spiritual and moral development' primarily in terms that are unrelated to religion, the present research examines both religious and secular understandings of spiritual and moral development. The research focuses upon Christian, as an example of religious, understandings of these terms since the 1988 Education Reform Act required Christianity to be taught 'in the main'.

Chapter four reviews research relating to religious education and pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes. The present research aims to add to the body of knowledge provided by earlier research and make a contribution to recommendations for the future development of religious education. The research review therefore takes note of the relevance of earlier research findings for teaching religious education. In order to determine the methodology best suited to the present research, the review also pays particular attention to research methodology, examining the strengths and weaknesses of earlier research. The chapter concludes by describing the research methodology chosen for the present study.

Part two of the dissertation describes the setting up of two inter-related questionnaire surveys, designed to provide answers to the research questions. Chapter five describes the teacher survey, which provided a profile of the religious education offered in each of the non-denominational secondary schools in Cornwall. In this survey a questionnaire was completed by the head of religious education in each of the 31 state-maintained non-denominational secondary schools in Cornwall. The resulting data provided information about provision for religious education, curriculum content and teaching methods, and teachers' attitudes toward their subject. From these findings each school was categorised according to its approach to religious education.

Chapter six describes the construction and piloting of a questionnaire designed to assess the spiritual and moral attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils in the context of their religious education. This questionnaire was to reveal pupils' knowledge of curriculum content, use of resources and experience of teaching methods, and would assess pupils' attitudes toward religious education, spiritual experience, Christian

belief and practice, and moral issues. It would also provide information relating to factors other than school provision that might contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development. A pilot study was carried out in one state-maintained non-denominational secondary school in Cornwall. The findings indicated that the pupil questionnaire survey would provide satisfactory answers to the research questions. It achieved its aims of identifying problems teachers might have in administering the questionnaires and pupils might have in completing the questionnaires. This led to some small modifications of the pupil questionnaire.

Part three presents the empirical data provided by 3,090 questionnaires completed by 998 year nine and 2,092 year ten pupils in 23 of the 31 non-denominational secondary schools in Cornwall. Following the recommendations of the Office for Standards in Education (1994), 'development' is measured in terms of 'attitude'. Chapters seven through to twelve present, as indicators of pupils' spiritual development, data relating to attitude toward religious education, self, spiritual experience and Christianity, and an index of Christian belief. Chapters thirteen through to seventeen present data that indicate pupils' moral attitudes toward personal choices, sexual issues, use of drugs, others' property, and environmental issues. Each chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale, then presents an attitudinal profile of the whole sample, then compares the possible influence of different teaching approaches in religious education and finally, begins to consider the influence of other factors that may contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes.

The conclusion provides a summary and discussion of the research findings, using the information drawn from the data from the two questionnaire surveys to answer the question of the impact of different approaches to religious education on pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes. It considers the implications of the research findings for the future development of religious education, and identifies the approaches most likely to make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Finally, it acknowledges the limitations of the present study, and suggests questions for further research.

PART ONE

Religious Education

and

Spiritual and Moral Development

Chapter One

Religious education in the 1990s:
historical influences and contemporary approaches

Overview

This chapter will identify and analyse, from a review of the relevant literature, different approaches to the religious education of the mid-1990s, the time when the research surveys presented in this dissertation took place. In order to understand these different approaches to religious education, the chapter will trace the history of the development of religious education in Britain, outlining the factors that led to different approaches, and discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each. It will pay particular attention to government requirements and recommendations for religious education, and will consider the impact of these on religious education in its different stages of development, and in particular, on the religious education of the mid-1990s. The chapter will identify, describe and evaluate each approach in turn.

A minimalist approach

The 1944 Education Act (section 25.2) made 'religious instruction', that is, the classroom teaching of religion, a statutory requirement for all schools. It was the only mandatory subject in the curriculum. Religious instruction in both county and church voluntary controlled schools was required to be in accordance with 'an agreed syllabus of religious instruction' (1944: sections 26, 29.6). The Fifth Schedule of the 1944 Education Act prescribed detailed and rigorous procedures for the preparation and adoption of an agreed syllabus.

The selection of religious instruction as the only mandatory subject and the detailed attention to the procedures for its implementation suggested that religious instruction was to be seen as a subject of major importance in the curriculum. Nevertheless, in spite of the apparent importance of the subject, a report on religious education a decade after the 1944 Education Act (Institute of Christian Education 1954) drew attention to poor achievement in the subject. The report gathered together the findings of a number of research surveys that had aimed to assess the state of religious education. Agreed syllabuses were criticised for being too academic and wide-ranging, resulting in poor retention of knowledge, confusion and superficiality (Institute of Christian Education 1954: 119, 120). However, the report concluded that the main causes of poor achievement in secondary schools were the lack of specialist training for religious education teachers and a serious dearth of appropriate

textbooks, Bibles, audio and visual aids, and equipment to use the latter (Institute of Christian Education 1954: 89, 131-134). Similar deficiencies were observed in the early 1960s (University of Sheffield Institute of Education 1961). It seemed that legislation had done little to achieve good classroom provision for the subject.

The situation appeared little changed a quarter of a century later. An analysis of the religious education comments in Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) reports for the years 1985 to 1988, the period immediately prior to the 1988 Education Reform Act (Orchard 1991: 15-21) suggested that provision for religious education was generally unsatisfactory. In all, 214 reports from non-denominational primary and secondary schools were analysed. Orchard drew attention to the fact that 80 schools in the secondary sector provided no evaluation of religious education, a fact that suggested that the subject was given little attention in the school curriculum. Of these 80 schools, 10 offered no religious education for non-examination pupils in the two years leading up to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) years, and a further 14 pointed to a lack of provision either in timetable allocations or in staffing. In the group of 80 schools only 5 attracted a 'favourable passing comment on religious education'. Provision for religious education was thus shown to be frequently inadequate, particularly for older pupils. Orchard's conclusion was that 'religious education departments in secondary schools were over-stretched and under-resourced' (Orchard 1991: 20).

In the years immediately preceding the 1988 Education Reform Act Michael Grimmitt (1987: 9) noted that the 'Personal, Social and Moral Education' courses which were 'fast becoming a feature of the secondary school curriculum, most notably in the fourth and fifth years', were beginning to vie with religious education for timetable time. He noted too that there was a tendency for religious education to be incorporated within these courses, and expressed the fear that if religious education were to become part of Personal, Social and Moral Education, it would be in danger of losing its identity. The implication was that the contribution of religion to such courses would be minimal. It seemed that the legal requirements for religious education were being ignored.

However, the 1988 Education Reform Act repeated and expanded the requirements of the 1944 Education Act. It required (1988: section 2.1a) that the basic curriculum for every maintained school should include provision for religious education for all registered pupils at the school. At first sight it appeared that the Education Reform Act had taken particular care to safeguard the inclusion of religious education in every school curriculum. However, the 1988 Education Reform Act (section 2.1b) required that the basic curriculum for every maintained school should also include what was to be known as 'the National Curriculum'. The latter was to comprise three or (in Wales) four core subjects, six other foundation subjects, and additionally for secondary schools, a modern foreign language. Thus for secondary schools religious education was just one of at least ten mandatory subjects.

Moreover, the 1988 Education Reform Act outlined a rigorous system of ensuring that progress was made in the National Curriculum subjects. Every school curriculum was to specify a 'programme of study', 'attainment targets' and 'assessment arrangements' for each National Curriculum subject at each of four 'key stages', the latter referring to new groupings of pupils in age bands broader than year groups (Education Reform Act 1988: sections 2.2 and 3.1-3). The Education Reform Act did not require religious education to be included in this mandatory monitoring process.

These innovations had advantages and disadvantages for religious education. On the one hand, they allowed for a wide-ranging and flexible approach to the subject. Agreed syllabus conferences remained free to develop syllabuses that would be relevant to the local community. Teachers of religious education could be free to explore new or experimental approaches to their subject in ways that were not open to teachers of the nationally controlled subjects. On the other hand, fears were expressed (for example, by John Hull in his Editorial in the *British Journal of Religious Education*, Autumn 1988) that the volume of resources and commitment needed for the National Curriculum subjects would mean that provision for religious education would be neglected.

In the years following the 1988 Education Reform Act the government appeared to try to protect the place of religious education in the curriculum. *Circular 3/89, The*

Education Reform Act 1988: religious education and collective worship (Department of Education and Science 1989) was one of a number of non-statutory documents provided by government in the years following the Education Reform Act to give guidance to schools in the interpretation and implementation of the legal requirements. Circular 3/89 stated that religious education had 'equal standing with the core and other foundation subjects within a school's curriculum', and stressed the need for 'a reasonable time available for the study of religious education' (Department of Education and Science 1989: paragraph 20). It did not, however, suggest what might be considered 'a reasonable time'. It mentioned 'the Government's commitment to strengthening the position of RE and collective worship' ((Department of Education and Science 1989: paragraph 7), yet there was no suggestion of government funding for the subject. Religious education was to remain dependent upon the goodwill of the local education authority, a fact that was seen by John Hull (1991a: 135) as problematic.

Hull noted that whilst the activities required in the development of the National Curriculum subjects had led to a beneficial increase of parallel activity in the field of religious education, such activity had all been carried out 'using mainly voluntary resources, supported sometimes by very small funding by LEAs.' He concluded, 'The resourcing of innovation and development in religious education remains a major cause of concern' (Hull 1991a: 135).

Although doing nothing to improve the resourcing of religious education, the government continued to seek to protect its place in the curriculum. *Circular 1/94: Religious Education and Collective Worship* (Department for Education 1994) argued that the 'special status of RE as a part of the basic but not of the National Curriculum ... ensures that RE has equal standing in relation to National Curriculum subjects within a school's curriculum' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 20). Perhaps recognising a weakness in the failure of Circular 3/89 to specify what might be 'a reasonable time' for the study of religious education, Circular 1/94 recommended that 45 hours per year should be allotted to religious education at Key Stage 3 and around 5 per cent of total curriculum time at Key Stage 4 (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 39).

In January 1994 the government took another major step towards establishing the place of religious education in the curriculum. The newly established School Curriculum and Assessment Authority produced two *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education*, to give guidance to agreed syllabus conferences on the contents and construction of agreed syllabuses. In the introduction to the *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education*, the hours recommended by Circular 1/94 to be allotted to religious education were repeated as minimum times, with the more specific recommendation of at least 40 hours per year at Key Stage 4. Perhaps in an attempt to give weight to the statement that 'RE has equal standing in relation to National Curriculum subjects' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 20), the terminology used in the model syllabuses was the same as that used for the National Curriculum subjects. The content for each key stage in each model syllabus was set out under the heading 'Programme of Study', and it was recommended that 'attainment targets' were included in agreed syllabuses.

However, in spite of the increase in government interest in religious education, there was continuing evidence that provision for religious education was poor, particularly at secondary school level. In *A further analysis of HMI reports on Religious Education: 1989-1991* (Orchard 1993: 21-27) Orchard refers to the findings of his earlier analysis, that the weaknesses of religious education lay mainly in the lack of time available for the subject, and the lack of skilled teaching. In this second analysis he states that 'new facts emerge which reinforce the view that RE is in just as parlous a state after the 1988 Act as it was before'. Orchard (1993: 21) points out that the more specific post-1988 reporting suggests that 'earlier reports may have failed to describe the extent of the problem faced, especially in the area of resource shortages and lack of commitment by schools'.

Orchard (1993: 23, 24) points out that many schools had made no attempt to 'address the pupils' entitlement to RE, especially in years 10 and 11, and of 47 schools criticised by HMI 36 had inadequate timetabling of RE for all pupils'. He suggests that 'half the teenagers at school will have no RE or RE of a very poor quality'. Orchard (1993: 27) concludes by pointing out that 'In spite of reassurances from government that religious education enjoys parity with other subjects in the basic curriculum, schools have failed to allocate time and resources for its delivery'

Orchard identifies the low status of the subject as being at the heart of religious education's problems, and suggests that ' now is the time for local surveys of the state of RE in our schools'. Finally, Orchard notes that although government had accepted responsibility for promoting the subject, no national resources had been allocated to the schools.

John Hull takes up this point in his Editorial in the *British Journal of Religious Education*, Spring 1994. He points out that huge numbers of teachers have never had any training in the subject, many secondary school religious education teachers have no specialist qualifications in their subject, provisions for in-service training are weak, timetable provision is seldom adequate, and funds for religious education resources 'are usually pitifully low' (1994a: 68). Hull blames government policy for these failings.

The present research forms part of a response to Orchard's call for 'local surveys' of religious education. In its survey of religious education in Cornwall, it will discover whether provision for religious education has improved as a result of government's stated support and recommendations for the subject, or whether provision remains inadequate. Schools where provision is poor, in the areas delineated by Hull (see above, 1994a: 68), will be categorised as 'minimalist' in their approach to religious education.

An adequate approach

Although over the years the focus of reports on religious education has been mainly on failings and difficulties, there has been evidence that some schools have made good, or at least adequate, provision for religious education. In Harold Loukes' research in the 1960s some 500 secondary schools were identified by local education authorities and others as being 'successful' in their religious education (Loukes 1965: 14). Beginning with a shortened version of this list, Colin Alves (1968: 30) compiled a new list of 520 schools that could be separated into 'successful' and 'less successful' groups. Success was judged in terms of pupils' knowledge, insights, attitudes and religious behaviour, the religion in question being Christianity. Having identified successful schools according to pupils' responses to questions relating to these criteria, Alves then set out to discover, by means of a teacher questionnaire, the

factors that might contribute to school success in religious education. Among these were the presence of external examinations in the subject, and a teacher's professional religious education (as opposed to 'theological') qualifications. The research did not take account of the resourcing of the subject, nor timetable allocations. However, using his chosen criteria for successful religious education, Alves' research suggested that a high proportion of the schools in the sample were providing a religious education that could be deemed successful.

Although the HMI reports analysed above (Orchard 1991, 1995) identified widespread failings in provision for religious education, the reports showed that provision in some schools was good. Orchard's analysis of the 1985-1988 reports shows that of the schools where religious education was included in the report, 38 schools were commended for their religious education, although 53 schools were criticised. In a further analysis of London schools, 15 were commended, although 30 were criticised. Orchard's analysis of the 1989-1991 reports shows that the content of religious education was commended by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in 17 schools, although criticised in 47 schools. Where the content of religious education was commended, it can be assumed that provision for religious education was at least adequate. Thus, although clearly in the minority, some schools appeared to be providing adequate religious education.

The preceding section in this chapter has suggested that the main criteria for deciding whether schools are failing to provide adequate religious education have been lack of time available for the subject, lack of specialist teachers, lack of public examination in the subject, and poor resourcing of the subject. It follows, then, that good provision in these areas indicates adequate provision for religious education. Good provision in these areas suggests the criteria that can be used in the present research to identify schools that have an adequate approach to religious education.

Since provision for religious education has been deemed a significant factor in the ability of religious education to contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development, the present research will seek first to assess provision for religious education in individual schools. Using the criteria listed in this and the preceding section, the research will identify schools with poor provision for religious education,

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describing these as having a 'minimalist' approach, and it will identify schools with good provision for religious education, describing these as having an 'adequate' approach. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) recommended (1994: 7) that 'attitude' should be used as a measure of 'development'. The present research will set out to discover whether there is a difference between the spiritual and moral attitudes of pupils in schools with a 'minimalist' approach to religious education and those in schools with an 'adequate' approach.

Whilst the first two sections of this chapter present approaches that relate to provision for religious education, the following two sections relate to curriculum content.

An 'in the main Christian' approach

According to the Durham Report (1970: 11), the negotiations that determined the requirements of the 1944 Education Act were between representatives of the Church of England, the Free Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Thus the 'religious instruction ' of the 1944 Education Act related solely to the teaching of Christianity. The question of other religions did not arise.

Hull's (1984) review of agreed syllabuses from 1924 onwards shows that until the mid-1960s Christianity was the only religion taught, and at the time of the 1944 Education Act the content of agreed syllabuses typically consisted mainly of biblical studies. Christianity was presented in terms of its Judaeo-Christian history, and pupils were introduced to the Bible as the textbook of the Christian faith (Hull 1984: 76).

The *Report of the Institute of Christian Education* (1954: 27) states that between 1944 and 1954 agreed syllabuses expressed the aim that 'children should understand and accept the Christian faith and follow the Christian way of life', in order to prepare children for adult membership of a predominantly Christian society. This approach came to be known as the 'confessional' approach. The report (1954: 120, 121) draws attention to poor achievements in religious education, concluding that pupils neither understood nor retained much of what they were taught. The report identifies the Bible as the main resource for teaching Christianity, and suggests that

the type of Bible-centred teaching generally found was both superficial and irrelevant to pupils' experiences of contemporary life. However, it lays most of the blame for poor achievement in religious education on the serious under-resourcing of the subject. The Durham Report (1970: 16) states that the content of most post-1944 agreed syllabuses was biblical study, of the kind that relied too heavily on university theology courses, and that they were drawn up 'more to satisfy scholars and churchmen than to meet the needs of the pupils'. It seems that criticisms of Bible teaching were not so much of the Bible as curriculum content but of teaching methods.

These findings were confirmed by Harold Loukes (1961). Researching teenagers' responses to religious education in the early 1960s, Loukes (1961: 80) found that teenage pupils were frustrated by the repetition of Bible stories and a childish approach to them. Loukes proposed an approach that sought to link the study of the Bible with spiritual and moral themes relevant to pupils' experiences and contemporary situations (Loukes 1961: 150-152). Ronald Goldman (1964), concerned with the child's capacity for religious understanding, researched the responses of young people to Bible stories. Goldman (1964: 230) concluded that in general, pupils benefited little from Bible teaching until they were capable of abstract thinking, at around the age of thirteen. Thus, criticisms of Bible teaching were again not so much of the Bible as curriculum content but of teaching methods.

Whilst study of the Bible seemed appropriate for the children of a predominantly Christian society, the following decades saw changes in the cultural composition of Britain that called for a reconsideration of the situation. The presence of significant numbers of pupils from non-Christian faith communities attending British schools increasingly affected the content of agreed syllabuses. John Hull (1989: 11) identifies the 1975 Birmingham agreed syllabus as the first to give a 'definitive statement' of an approach that 'regarded religious education as consisting of the study of the principal religious traditions of Britain with an emphasis on Christianity'. Hull states that this approach could be found in all 70 or more agreed syllabuses produced by local education authorities between 1975 and the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act. However, Hull emphasises that in the years leading up

to the 1988 Education Reform Act Christianity remained the major focus of religious education, with a concern to present Christianity as a 'living relevant faith'.

A random sample of pre-1988 agreed syllabuses shows that most give Christianity predominance, on the grounds that this was the religion that had made, and continued to make, the greatest contribution to British culture. The 1978 Hampshire agreed syllabus, for example, states that the content of religious education 'will be drawn largely from the study of Christianity in its many forms, this being the religious faith which has most influenced our culture' (Hampshire 1978: 8). The foreword to the Isle of Wight (1984: 3) agreed syllabus makes a similar statement, as does the 1987 City of Salford agreed syllabus, modelled closely upon the 1982 Cambridgeshire agreed syllabus (City of Salford 1987: 34). These syllabuses suggest that other religions should be studied, but specify neither the religions nor the amount of time to be given to them.

The 1988 Education Reform Act thus made mandatory what was already in many cases established practice. It required that religious education in maintained schools follow a locally agreed syllabus that was to 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (Education Reform Act 1988: section 8.3). The Education Reform Act did not specify which religions might be considered 'the other principal religions', nor did it specify the proportion of time to be given to the teaching of Christianity and to the teaching of other religions. It was therefore unclear as to how the Education Reform Act was to be implemented, particularly in the context of a locally (rather than nationally) agreed syllabus.

Circular 1/94, Religious Education and Collective Worship (Department for Education 1994), attempted to deal with the issues raised by section 8.3 of the 1988 Education Reform Act. It stated that 'As a whole and at each key stage, the relevant content devoted to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35). The 'other principal religions' were to appear in the syllabus as a whole, and 'the precise balance between Christianity and other religions should take account both of the national and the local position, ... the local school

population and the wishes of local parents' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35). The circular made it clear that both nationally and locally Christianity was to predominate, but it did not identify, either in name or number, the 'other principal religions'. Furthermore, whilst stressing that religious education was to be locally relevant, the circular offered no suggestions as to how the national 'in the main Christian' position might be balanced with local wishes.

In areas where Christianity predominated, for example, where there might be few members of other faiths, the local position might be considered to be 'wholly' Christian. Grace Davie (1994: 25), for example, argues that 'The presence of pluralism should not be exaggerated. It is an urban phenomenon and differs from region to region. Large tracts of the country ... remain uncompromisingly mono-cultural'. In wholly Christian areas the 'local school population' and 'local parents' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35) might see no justification for pupils to study any other religion. In contrast, in areas where other faith communities might predominate, there might be a tendency to ignore the 'in the main Christian' requirement. *Circular 1/94* offered ambiguity rather than guidance in these matters.

The *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) made it clear, however, that whatever the local school population, all syllabus conferences were to ensure that Christianity would be taught 'in the main'. Each model sets out one major compulsory section on Christianity for each key stage, with shorter sections on Christianity and on five other religions from which choices might be made. In spite of earlier criticisms of the use of the Bible, it remains the major resource for teaching Christianity. The model syllabuses devote one topic area out of five, across Key Stages 1 to 4, to study of 'the Bible'. Additionally, they draw mainly on the Bible as a resource for teaching two further topic areas, namely, 'God' and 'Jesus', and refer frequently to the Bible for teaching the remaining two topic areas, namely, 'the Church', and 'Ways of Life'. The main focus is on the gospel accounts of Jesus' life and teachings. Little attention is given to the Old Testament apart from references to the creation accounts and the ten commandments. *Model 1* focuses on applying Jesus' teachings to contemporary life. *Model 2* focuses on Christian doctrine, tracing such themes as 'Incarnation', 'Redemption', 'Body of Christ', 'Revelation', and 'Discipleship'.

In the light of this focus on Bible themes and topics, the present research will take frequent use of the Bible as the main criterion for identifying schools where Christianity is being taught 'in the main'. It will also consider the proportion of time given to the teaching of Christianity compared with that given to other religions, whether Christianity is taught at both key stages, and whether the study of Christianity is offered for GCSE examination. Schools fulfilling these criteria will be identified as 'in the main' Christian in their approach to religious education.

A 'world religions' approach

As noted above, at the time of the 1944 Education Act the teaching of Christianity alone could be considered educationally appropriate to a culture that was seen by most to be almost wholly 'Christian' (Durham 1970, Davie 1994). However, John Hull (1984) describes how the growing numbers of Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish children attending Birmingham schools in the late 1960s suggested that a new approach was needed. The City of Birmingham agreed syllabus (1975) made just a general reference to religions other than Christianity. The accompanying handbook, however, recommended that Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism should be available as options for study at secondary school level (Hull 1984: 84). This initiated a trend that was to become widespread. Most syllabuses produced between 1975 and 1988, the year of the Education Reform Act, made some reference to religions other than Christianity, and many were accompanied by handbooks containing materials relating to other religions (Hull 1989: 11).

In general, choice of syllabus content was largely influenced by the religious affinities of the local population. The 1982 Berkshire agreed syllabus, for example, demonstrating awareness of the variety of ethnic communities clustered around Heathrow airport, describes Britain as a multicultural, multifaith society and suggests for study stories with religious themes drawn from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism (Berkshire 1982: 12, 13). In contrast, the Isle of Wight agreed syllabus (1984: 27, 28) recommends only the study of 'at least one other' (unspecified) religion. The syllabus states that the scarcity of racial and cultural minorities on the island suggests a need for pupils to study 'at least one other major religion in order to increase their awareness and understanding of the multifaith culture of contemporary Britain'. Yet it insists upon a focus upon

Christianity, stressing not only the influence of Christianity on British history and culture, but also the importance of 'our own Christian heritage' and 'ease of access' to the Christian faith.

Other agreed syllabuses of this era showed this same tendency to be relevant primarily to the cultural composition of the communities they served. However, the Education Reform Act (1988: section 8.3) required that *all* locally agreed syllabuses were not only to give Christianity predominance but were also to 'take account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. This meant that syllabuses that took account solely of the local situation might no longer conform to legal requirements. Hull points out that 'Christian' areas might prefer to ignore other religions, whilst in areas where the local school population was predominantly Jewish, or Muslim, for example, there might be resistance to giving Christianity predominance. Referring to the 'in the main Christian' requirement of the 1988 Education Reform Act, Hull (1989: 61) observes, 'Many people have got the impression that the new Act announces a period of Christian aggression in education. Alarm has been expressed by thoughtful Muslims, Jews and others about the effects of this upon religious harmony in this country'. Thus it seemed that the requirement to give Christianity predominance might at best be ignored, at worst provoke feelings of antagonism towards Christianity.

Hull (1990, 1991b) reveals that the decision to make mandatory the inclusion of 'other' religions in agreed syllabuses had caused much concern in the House of Lords around the time of the passing of the 1988 Education Reform Act. Hull concludes, however, that protests were directed not so much against the teaching of world religions, but against the idea that children would be taught many religions together, resulting in a 'multifaith mish-mash'. Hull suggests (1991b: 16, 17) that the concerns relate primarily to a thematic approach to teaching world religions that would lead, it was believed, to a value-free relativism and the teaching of religions by and to those of a different faith.

It can be argued that the government had answered all concerns in the carefully balanced wording of section 8.3 in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Yet the legislation did not give answers to some of the more specific questions that had

been raised. Syllabus conferences still had to decide on the numbers of religions to be included, in what proportions, and at which key stages.

An *Analysis of Agreed Syllabuses for Religious Education* (National Curriculum Council 1993b) reviewed 27 new agreed syllabuses that were published after the 1988 Education Reform Act and before 1 December 1992. According to the review, all syllabuses fulfilled the requirements of the Education Reform Act, section 8.3, in that they specified that Christianity would be studied at all key stages, though only four stated that Christianity would be given priority. Most syllabuses indicated the number of religions from which material could be drawn, but only in general terms such as 'Christianity and at least one' or 'at least two other religions' (National Curriculum Council 1993b: 1). The National Curriculum Council (1993b: 1) suggested that if specific detail of content from individual religions must be mandatory at each key stage, hardly any syllabuses complied with the law. There was no such legal requirement; nevertheless the National Curriculum Council recommended that the Department for Education 'issue further guidelines as to the interpretation of the law' (National Curriculum Council 1993b: 3).

Subsequently, *Circular 1/94* stated that in order to fulfil legal requirements an agreed syllabus must 'indicate at what ages or stages the particular subject matter in relation to each religion should be taught', and continued, 'this does not mean that all religions have to be taught in equal depth or that all have to be taught at each key stage' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 34). It gave no further guidance but recommended that agreed syllabus conferences refer to the national model syllabuses for guidance in such matters (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 38).

The *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) selected the following five religions (in addition to Christianity) for detailed study: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Reasons for the choice of religions were not given, but the selection of these particular religions suggested that these were to be considered the other 'principal' religions practised in Great Britain. Each syllabus states that 'the prescriptive elements of an agreed syllabus should include Christianity at each key stage AND ensure that all the other

principal religions have been included in the syllabus as a whole' (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 5). It remained for an agreed syllabus conference to decide at which key stage the study of a particular religion or religions should be made mandatory. It was stressed that conferences should give as much flexibility as possible to individual schools, and were to advise schools to take account of the wishes of parents and governors. Teachers were to be advised to take additional faiths into account when there were adherents in the classroom.

The debates concerning the balance of teaching Christianity with teaching other religions have suggested that in some cases, schools may wish to give more attention to other religions, or at least treat all religions equally. The present research will therefore identify schools with a 'world religions' approach' according to whether a number of other religions are taught in addition to Christianity at each key stage, and whether other religions are offered for GCSE examination. Following OFSTED's (1994: 7) recommendation to use 'attitude' as a measure of 'development', the research will then set out to discover whether there is a difference between the spiritual and moral attitudes of pupils in schools with an 'in the main Christian' approach to religious education and those in schools with a 'world religions' approach.

Whilst the third and fourth sections of this chapter present approaches that relate to the content of religious education, the following four approaches relate to teaching methods.

A thematic approach

Theme teaching was developed in the 1960s and 1970s as an antidote to the reportedly dry, academic, text-centred approach of most post-1944 religious instruction (Durham 1970: 16). Harold Loukes (1961: 9), for example, noted that pupils reportedly retained biblical knowledge better than they retained knowledge of history, but he was concerned to know how relevant this knowledge was to the lives of fourteen-year old school leavers. He therefore analysed the responses of these pupils to questions concerning religious issues and the religious instruction they had received in secondary school. Loukes (1961: 80) discovered that teenage pupils were frustrated by the repetition of Bible stories, but expressed consistent interest in

religious issues (Loukes 1961: 90). He concluded that these pupils did not wish to abolish religious instruction, but wanted it to be relevant.

Loukes (1961: 106) introduced theme teaching in the form of what he called 'a Christian technique of problem-solving'. Loukes (1961:150-152) suggested that teen-age pupils study a wide range of problems with which they may be familiar, such as problems with authority, friendship, sex and marriage, money, work, prayer, suffering, death. Loukes suggested that in the first three years of secondary school the Bible would provide moral and spiritual themes, and these would then be applied to contemporary situations. In the final year the contemporary world would provide themes relevant to pupils' experiences, which would then be considered in the light of biblical teaching.

After further research Loukes (1965: 113) suggested that all religious education must begin with pupils' experiences in the context of the school community, moving on to more generalised secular subjects, then finally introducing religious elements. At secondary school level, within the three themes of the universe and life, human society, and human personality, topics could first be studied from a secular perspective, then introduced into discussions 'in a dimension of ultimate concern' (Loukes 1965: 155, 156). Thus in his later work Loukes moved away from biblical studies towards an experiential, child-centred approach that might, in its aim to make religious education relevant to pupils' everyday lives, have little reference to religion.

At the same time Ronald Goldman (1964: 34), working from a psychological perspective, was concerned with the child's capacity for religious understanding. Following Piaget's (1932) definitions of stages of cognitive development, Goldman researched the responses of young people from four different age groups to three pictures portraying Christian religious practices and to three Bible stories. The research findings led Goldman (1964: 230) to argue that in general, Bible teaching should not be introduced until pupils were capable of abstract thinking, at around the age of thirteen.

Goldman (1965: 203-208) called for a radical reform of agreed syllabuses, with children's emotional and intellectual needs and capacities forming the central concern. Biblical material should be reserved for the more able older pupils and then closely linked with real life experiences. Goldman (1965: 110) calls this child-centred, experiential approach a 'life-themes' approach. Goldman (1965: 111) suggests for juniors life-themes such as homes, friends, holidays, and journeys, linked with religious illustrations only where clearly relevant, and for seniors (Goldman 1965: 166), life-themes related to adolescents' needs. The latter might include 'security-in-freedom', status, love, and 'meaning', and placed alongside these might be Bible themes (Goldman 1965: 177).

The approaches of both Loukes and Goldman were later criticised (Schools Council 1971) for being 'neo-confessional', expecting a favourable response to Christian concepts and therefore inappropriate to the multicultural society religious education served. Paradoxically, Goldman's approach was also criticised in that his 'life-themes' might have little or no religious content. In the case of both writers the thematic approach related to an experiential approach.

Michael Grimmitt (1973) developed a number of thematic approaches that could be used in the study of any religion, or in the context of 'implicit religion' where there might be no reference to religion. Grimmitt (1973: 49) argued that religious education must use the child's own 'existential experiences' as the starting-point, beginning with what Grimmitt describes as 'secular' 'Depth Themes'. 'Depth Themes' were to be used to explore life through the child's own feelings and experiences. They would develop a child's skill in reflecting and developing insight into his own and others' feelings, may prompt questions that are central to religious thinking, and could provide the 'raw material' from which religious concepts are made (Grimmitt 1973: 57, 58).

The use of 'Depth Themes' was to lead into the use of 'Symbol and Language Themes'. The latter would enable children to differentiate between truth claims based on 'observable, cognitive, objective or positive facts' and religious truth claims which involve 'value judgements based upon personal experience but considered to have universal validity' (Grimmitt 1973: 61). They would also introduce children to

traditional religious language, and help them to learn how to use it (Grimmitt 1973: 69). Finally, Grimmitt (1973: 79) proposed the use of 'Situation Themes', to provide children with an opportunity to discuss and analyse situations that call for some sort of moral choice or judgement. Grimmitt (1973: 84) argued that although 'Morals' and 'Religion' were not necessarily interdependent, 'Situation Themes' could help children to see how religious beliefs could provide the rationale underlying a person's values, attitudes and actions.

Grimmitt acknowledged the 'secular flavour' of his theme teaching, but justified it on the grounds that his 'Existential Approach' would enable the agnostic or atheist teacher to engage with religious education without acting against his conscience. He suggested that his 'Existential Approach' should be used in conjunction with the phenomenological approach recommended in Working Paper 36 (Schools Council 1971), and developed 'Schemes of Work' using his three types of themes in conjunction with Smart's (1969) six dimensions of religion and in the context of a number of different world religions. Thus the thematic approach shifted from being the means for an experiential approach to biblical studies to being associated with a phenomenological approach to the study of many religions.

Whereas theme teaching had ensured that religious education was relevant to children's everyday lives and had provided religious education with the opportunity for developing new approaches, it now became the major reason for criticisms of teaching world religions.

John Hull's (1991b) analysis of the parliamentary debates relating to religious education in the 1988 Education Reform Act presents the main criticisms. Hull (1991b: 9-11) draws attention to the numerous newspaper articles that described multifaith religious education as a 'religious cocktail', a relativistic 'value-free hotch-potch', a 'kaleidoscope of shallow ideas about myriad belief systems', a 'parade around a museum of religion', and a 'fruit cocktail of world faiths'. Hull notes particularly the high incidence of the use of the word 'mishmash'. Hull (1991b: 16, 17) argues that the pejorative use of the 'mishmash' was not in objection to the proportion of weight being given to religions other than Christianity, but to the dilution of the Christian faith into a 'syncretistic relativism'. Hull suggests too that

the objectors were not, in fact, criticising a phenomenological approach to teaching world religions but rather a thematic approach in which teaching material is drawn from several religious traditions at the same time.

Hull (1991b: 42, 43) defends the thematic approach to teaching religions. He criticises what he calls a 'totalising approach', where the emphasis is upon the uniqueness and separateness of each individual religion, believing that this will lead to competitiveness, intolerance and relativism. He also criticises the argument that when each religion is taught separately, the inherent qualities of each religious tradition, such as love and respect, will automatically promote tolerance and understanding towards all others, and points out that historically, that does not seem to have been the case.

The thematic approach was common in many of the religious education textbooks used in the schools involved in the present research. *Religions of Man* (Whiting 1986), for example, deals with such themes as 'books to read', 'where and how to worship', and 'holding festivals'. *Six Religions in the Twentieth Century* (Cole 1986) deals with similar themes across six religions. *New Steps in Religious Education* (Keene 1991) deals with the themes of 'messengers of God', 'religious buildings', 'people at prayer', and 'feasts and festivals', across five religions. However, the draft versions of the *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) criticise this approach. The draft version of *Model 1* states:

> The model is set out in sections specific to a religion. This is to emphasise the importance of pupils acquiring a coherent understanding of individual religions. They are unlikely to do this if they only encounter an aspect of a religion out of the context of that faith. ... The model syllabuses have begun by identifying the key beliefs and practices of individual religions, not with 'themes' or 'dimensions' or other categories which are not intrinsic to each specific religion (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 2)

The draft version of *Model 2* repeats the above, and describes the 'themes' or 'dimensions' or 'other categories' as being 'arbitrarily imposed upon the religion'. The final versions of the models have a slightly less critical approach. They repeat the first two sentences of the instructions quoted above, but comment, 'There will be

occasions when it is important to look at an issue in terms of two or more religions in order to explain the relationship between them.' The *Introduction* to the model syllabuses states that 'attempts to produce a third model, structured around shared 'dimensions' or 'themes' in religions were abandoned' (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 5). The document notes that numerous arguments against such an approach had been offered, among them that such an approach would not lead to a clear understanding of different religions and that some conceptual abstractions might detract from the uniqueness of religions.

John Hull (1994) criticised the fact that there were only two model syllabuses and that both presented each religion separately. Hull (1994: 3, 4) complains that 'the model syllabuses are still based upon the assumption of separation and not of mutuality and dialogue'. He argues that the model syllabuses did not recognise the indivisibility of the religious history of humanity, nor did they provide for 'a study of the religious dimension of human experience' or a generic study of religion.

These debates and discussions suggest that there were fears that a thematic approach to teaching a number of religions would present an inaccurate and incomplete picture of a religion, and might promote in pupils' confusion, indifference or even hostility toward religion. Nevertheless the textbooks of the 1990s tended to favour a thematic approach. In the light of the debates surrounding the use of a thematic approach to teaching about religions, the present research will seek to identify schools that have adopted this approach. It will ask how many religions are taught at each key stage, and whether by means of a thematic approach or a systematic approach.

A systematic approach

A 'systematic approach' is the term commonly used in religious education literature to refer to teaching religions one at a time, independently of each other. Hull (1991b: 16) states that in the 'systems' approach 'each religion is taught more or less entire in fairly extended units. The subject matter of such systematic teaching is the religion as a whole'. He contrasts this approach with a thematic approach and, as noted above, blames the thematic approach for the criticisms of the teaching of world religions. Since the two approaches are directly contrasting approaches, very little

reference to the systematic approach can be found other than in relation to the debates concerning the thematic approach to teaching a number of religions.

As noted in the preceding section, Hull (1991b) gathered together, from the parliamentary debates and press articles around the period of the passing of the 1988 Education Reform Act, a large number of the critical comments relating to multifaith religious education, comments that suggested the likely impact of thematic multifaith teaching on pupils' spiritual and moral development. These comments indicate, by means of contrast, the expected impact of teaching religions separately. If thematic teaching is expected to lead to the dilution of a faith, confusion over beliefs and values, and trivialisation of religions and cultures (Hull 1991b: 11, 12), then teaching religions separately can be expected to preserve the strength and purity of each religion and lead to clarity of beliefs and values, and respect for each religion and culture. A qualitative study by Homan and King (1993), taking account of the same parliamentary debates, addressed the issue of teaching a number of religions by setting up three small-scale research projects involving different groups of primary school children. Using a number of different research methods, Homan and King described different ways of introducing the children to different religions, either by dealing with religions separately or, in one of the projects, by dealing with one aspect of three religions at the same time. Whilst acknowledging the lack of statistical significance for their findings, they found that at the end of each small project pupils had more positive attitudes toward God and religion, more tolerant attitudes toward other religions and, in the case of the thematic approach, there was no evidence of confusion. They suggested that more rigorous and systematic investigation was needed.

More recent research studies have now investigated the question of teaching about religions thematically or systematically, using quantitative research methods (see, for example, Kay and Smith 2000, Smith and Kay 2000). The present research will seek to identify schools that use a systematic approach to teaching religions. It will ask how many religions are taught at each key stage, and whether by means of a thematic approach or a systematic approach. Following OFSTED's recommendation (1994: 7) to use 'attitude' as a measure of 'development', the research will then set out to discover whether there is a difference between the spiritual and moral attitudes of

pupils in schools with a thematic approach to teaching religions and those in schools with a systematic approach.

The final two sections of this chapter will present two further approaches that relate to teaching methods in religious education.

A phenomenological approach

As noted earlier, initially British religious education sought to initiate pupils into and nurture pupils in the Christian faith, but increases in the numbers of members of other faiths living in Britain led to the teaching of other religions. This led to changes not only in curriculum content but also in teaching methodology.

The work of Ninian Smart brought a new approach to the study of religions. Writing at the end of the 1960s in the context of religious studies at university level, Smart (1968: 10) argues for an expansion of the traditional studies of Christian theology, with its emphasis on doctrine, into other theologies and also other dimensions of religion. Smart (1968: 15-18) suggests that all religions should be studied in terms of six essential components, or dimensions, namely, the doctrinal, the mythological, the ethical, the ritual, the experiential and the social, later (Smart 1989: 20) adding a seventh dimension, the 'material'. Smart argues that since all dimensions are interdependent, all should be studied in order to gain a true representation of a religion.

Smart (1968: 90) refers to a 'schizophrenia in religious education', caused by the 1944 requirement for what was understood to be 'Christian' education and the secular nature of institutions of higher education. He suggests that the tension can be resolved if Christian theology expands to embrace the comparative study of religions. Religious education should be 'designed to give people the capacity to understand religious phenomena, to discuss sensitively religious claims' (Smart 1968: 96). Smart's approach involved finding common areas of study for all religions, and was to be rational, objective and evaluative.

Smart's approach to the study of religions influenced secondary school religious education through the *Working Paper 36: Religious Education in Secondary Schools*

(Schools Council 1971). As a member of the working party Smart had a major influence on shaping the outcome. The paper applied Smart's multidimensional and evaluative approach to religious studies to the context of secondary school religious education.

Working Paper 36 argues that the confessional approach of most agreed syllabuses of the late 1960s were inappropriate for schools where pupils might have no religious faith or might be adherents of faiths other than Christianity (Schools Council 1971: 10, 11). Instead, the paper recommends a combination of an open-ended personal search for meaning with the objective study of the phenomena of religion (Schools Council 1971: 21). This 'phenomenological' approach should involve 'a dialogue with experience and a dialogue with living religions, so that the one can interpret and reinforce the other'. An empathic experience of the faith of individuals and groups was to be encouraged, in order to promote religious understanding and tolerance, yet the subjectivity of religious belief was to be described objectively (Schools Council 1971: 43). All was to be done in 'a spirit of free inquiry' (Schools Council 1971: 28). Teachers were to take up a position of 'procedural neutrality', allowing pupils to 'do their own thinking' (Schools Council 1971: 91).

The paper describes two approaches to the study of religion. It talks of 'explicit' religion, which it defines as 'the study of religion as an historical, social and psychological phenomenon', and 'implicit' religion, which it describes as residing in 'those elements of secular experience - like wonder, guilt and love - which evoke questions about life's ultimate significance, its values, meaning and purpose' (Schools Council 1971: 19). Both approaches to the study of religions were to be encouraged.

Some of the recommendations of *Working Paper 36* were taken up six years later by the *Report of the Schools Council Religious Education Working Party on Aims and Objectives, a Groundplan for the Study of Religion* (Schools Council 1977). The report states that pupils were to be helped to develop attitudes of open enquiry and the skills of evaluation and understanding, which could be applied to the study of any religion. This approach should enable pupils to understand the significance of faith claims for both adherents and non-adherents, and evaluate such claims for

themselves (Schools Council 1977: 19-21). The objective, detached approach of *Working Paper 36* was thus reinforced.

Working Paper 36 had described the phenomenological approach as involving a 'dialogue with experience and a dialogue with living religions'. It had also used the term 'self-transcendence', which it interpreted as 'using the imagination to participate in the lives and thoughts of others' (Schools Council 1977: 22). In the years that followed, however, the 'dialogue with experience', whether relating to pupils' own experiences or to the experiential dimension of the religions to be studied, was largely neglected. In the agreed syllabuses of the 1970s and 1980s the 'phenomena' of religion are understood largely in terms of the public or 'external' expressions of religion. A much repeated aim for religious education is that it should develop pupils' cognitive and evaluative skills, and thus equip pupils to engage in their own personal and open-ended quest for meaning in life. Religious education textbooks of the 1970s and 1980s introduce the study of world religions together with what they describe as 'the phenomenological approach'. Herod's *World Religions* (1970), Nigosian's *World Religions* (1975), and Whiting's *Religions of Man* (1983) are typical examples. Studies of world religions centre on the ritual, mythical and social dimensions. The topics typically chosen for study include a brief history of the religion together with descriptions of festivals, rites of passage, places of worship, and objects used in worship. The approach is to be rational, objective and detached. Pupils are to understand and evaluate.

This so-called phenomenological approach thus became the norm for religious education throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The approach was considered educationally appropriate in a society that was variously described as pluralist, multiracial and multicultural (Grimmitt 1973: 19), and secular (Smith 1969, Hirst 1974). It was to be recommended not only because it supported the teaching of a number of religions on equal terms (Department of Education and Science 1985b) but also because it could provide for religious education an approach that could be justified as being 'educationally' valid. Using R S Peters' (1967: 1-9) criteria for educational validity for a subject, Grimmitt (1973: 16, 26-29) argues that the phenomenological approach makes it possible for religion to be studied as a unique mode of thought, worthwhile to human understanding, that it will widen the child's

cognitive perspective in a unique and valuable way, and that it will foster the child's capacity to think for himself.

The Swann Report (Department of Education and Science 1985b), in demanding that religious education play a major part in improving race relations, called for the phenomenological approach. The report understands this to mean that religions would be studied objectively and impartially. The report argues that this is the only approach that will protect the multiplicity of beliefs and 'non-beliefs' in society and will counteract the claims of the ethnic minorities that their faiths are being compared negatively with Christianity (Department of Education and Science 1985b: 472, 473).

The phenomenological approach of the 1970s and 1980s focused largely upon four of Smart's original six dimensions of religion, namely the mythical, ritual, ethical and social, the latter two predominantly at secondary school level. The textbooks of this era largely ignored the experiential and the doctrinal dimensions of religion. There are very few cases where pupils are encouraged to try to imagine what it might be like to be a member of a particular faith community, or to relate the study of a particular aspect of a religion to their own personal experiences. There are even fewer instances of attempts to deal with Christian doctrines such as grace, atonement, redemption or original sin.

In the years immediately following the 1988 Education Reform Act there were numerous criticisms of the so-called phenomenological approach. Alison Leech (1989), for example, points out that the 'phenomenological' approach of the 1980s misrepresented Smart's original presentation of the approach as a six-dimensional study of a religion viewed from the perspectives of the adherents. She points out that religious phenomena were now understood to be only those that were 'publicly viewable', and that these were to be viewed from an objective, neutral standpoint. Leech (1989: 74) calls for a return to the phenomenology that seeks to understand religious phenomena in terms of the meaning they have for the adherent, and suggests that this will involve a high level of self-awareness on the part of both teacher and pupil.

Nicola Slee (1989: 129-131) questions the feasibility of the 'textbook' phenomenological approach on a number of grounds. First, Slee queries the assumption that school-age pupils will reach the stage of maturity necessary for empathy and 'self-transcendence', the latter described in *Working Paper 36* as the ability to 'bracket out' one's own beliefs and attitudes in order to be able to enter into another's. Secondly, Slee argues that the phenomenological approach encourages a consumerist attitude towards religion, which may lead to 'unhelpful emphases on the superficial, the external and the exotic on the one hand, or the conservative, the established and the institutional in religious traditions on the other hand'. Such an approach will fail to reveal 'the profound interiority of faith' and 'the richness, complexity and dynamism of religious traditions'. Thirdly, Slee argues that a consumerist approach may lead to a relativising of truth-claims, and fourthly, that a neutral, objective study of religion may lead to scepticism and agnosticism. Finally, Slee argues that a 'bracketing out' of all questions of truth and commitment fails to provide pupils with the resources needed to face the problems raised by a pluralism of beliefs and values, and wrestle with them.

Slee's article summarises the major concerns with the phenomenological approach, as understood and practised at the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act. Yet most of the textbooks in use in the schools involved in the survey stated that they used a phenomenological approach to the study of religions. They presented a detached, critical approach to the study of religions, and focused very largely on the 'externals' of the religions. Conversations with teachers involved in the surveys revealed that they were familiar with the word 'phenomenological' and understood it in terms of its 'textbook' meaning. In the present research, schools will therefore be categorised as having a 'phenomenological' approach, understood in 'textbook' terms, if they self-identify as such.

An experiential approach

The preceding review of different approaches to religious education has shown that major criticisms of the subject have been that content has not been relevant to pupils' experiences and interests, and methods of teaching have failed to engage pupils with content in any meaningful way.

As noted earlier, Loukes, Goldman and Grimmitt sought to address the issue of relevance by developing 'theme teaching', an approach that related content closely to pupils' personal experiences. Loukes (1965: 97) describes the process of educating as one which begins with 'raw, concrete experience' and proceeds 'by means of rational discourse to the understanding of it'. Loukes (1965: 102) suggests that, applied to the teaching of religion, the process of educating must begin by pointing to 'the areas in which children may meet God for themselves, in the mystery of the world around them, in the dreams men have had of the possibilities before the race, in the men and women whose lives give witness to the dreams'. Loukes' 'experiential religious education' thus aims to lead children to an experiential awareness of God, through experiences of the natural world and empathy with the experiences of others.

Goldman's approach begins with children's needs. Religious education must stem from children's interests, and it must aim to extend these so that children 'come to see their experiences in depth'. Religious truth as an interpretation of experience will then be known at a personal level (Goldman 1965: 65, 66). Goldman (1965: 90) points out that young children constantly ask questions about life, death, and their own experiences of organised religion. Such questions can be used to explore children's experiences in greater depth, then place them in a Christian context. Children must learn 'truth' by experience, by personal encounter (Goldman 1965: 118).

Grimmitt's (1973: 54-59) 'Depth Themes' involved a different kind of experiential approach. They were not designed to relate the child's experiences to religious themes. Grimmitt states, 'Rather they are designed to provide [the child] with an opportunity to practise a particular skill - that of reflecting at depth on his own experiences'. Grimmitt argues that we must not be disturbed by the fact that 'Depth Themes are purely "secular"'. Grimmitt (1973: 58) suggests that if children are finding new meaning and purpose in their own experiences they are both laying the foundations for understanding religious concepts and acting theologically, 'expressing "religious" ideas in terms which are meaningful and relevant to 20th century secular man'. Grimmitt's experiential approach thus moves toward the

'secularisation' of theology, an approach later adopted in government documentation as 'spiritual development'.

In contrast, Smart's (1969) experiential approach focuses upon the experiential dimension of religion, which he describes as being the most essential for a full understanding of religion. Smart (1969: 11) argues that the significance of the 'externals' of religion, such as ceremonies, places of worship, historical events, can only be fully understood by 'penetrating into the hearts and minds of believers'. Smart cites the Buddha's Enlightenment experience, St. Paul's Damascus Road conversion, the Buddhist monk's contemplative experience of peace and the Christian's faith in answered prayer as examples of the experiential dimension of religion, and argues that some understanding of such experiences is essential for an understanding of the respective religions.

Working Paper 36 (Schools Council 1971) suggested an experiential approach in its exposition of 'implicit' religion. The paper states that 'implicit' religion is to be found in 'elements of secular experience' which evoke questions about life's ultimate significance (Schools Council 1971: 19). Though building mainly upon Smart's dimensional approach to the study of religions, with its reference to 'implicit' religion the working paper took another step towards disconnecting religious experience from its religious context. However, whether in a secular or a religious context, little attention was given to an experiential approach in the religious education textbooks and agreed syllabuses of the 1970s and 1980s.

As noted above, by the end of the 1980s fears were being expressed that phenomenological and thematic approaches to religious education were having little impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Michael Grimmitt (1973: 26-29), having earlier supported the phenomenological approach on the grounds that it met educational critieria, later criticised what he observed of its use in the religious education of the late 1980s. Grimmitt (1987: 137) not only deplores the mere amassing of information about different religions, which he calls 'multi-fact' religious education, but also considers that investigating a religion 'from the point of view of the religious adherent' might 'only serve to make religion even more remote from the life of the pupils'. He argues that pupils will be unlikely to be interested in

the views of religious believers if they have no relevance to pupils' own experiences and interests.

Grimmitt (1987: 125) suggests an alternative approach for religious education. He identifies human spirituality as a core human value, a human capacity for 'spiritual awareness', an inherent and irreducible characteristic of 'being human'. Grimmitt (1987: 133) proposes for religious education an experiential approach that is based upon 'Shared Human Experience', a phrase that he suggests describes the total arena of everything human beings experience, and the arena in which they seek to give meaning to all their experiences. Grimmitt (1987: 141) suggests that for spiritual development to take place pupils must first be helped to look critically at their own beliefs and values in order to formulate their own 'ultimate' questions about meaning. Religious content can then be juxtaposed with the content of pupils' 'life-worlds' in such a way as to help pupils to *use* religious beliefs and values as instruments for the critical evaluation of their own beliefs and values'. Grimmitt (1987:160) argues that 'all human understanding of spirituality, including that understanding provided by the great religions of the world, links spiritual development with the growth of self-awareness'. Greer (1988: 12) criticised Grimmitt for the lack of a clear understanding of the nature of spirituality. What was clear, however, was the fact that for Grimmitt spiritual development was to do with the development of self-awareness rather than of awareness of a divine being.

This concept of spiritual development was appropriated in the textbook *New Methods in RE Teaching - an Experiential Approach* (Hammond et al. 1990), which sought to address some of the criticisms of the religious education of the 1990s. Whereas Slee (1989) had seen positive aspects in both the confessional and phenomenological approaches to religious education and sought to draw these together, the authors of *New Methods in RE Teaching* focus on the failings of both and reject both. The book criticises the Christian confessional approach for ignoring or rejecting the convictions of others, claiming that this offers pupils a biased view of religious experience. At the same time, the book criticises the objective phenomenological approach for failing to offer pupils the opportunity to enter into the spiritual experience that lies behind belief and practice (Hammond et al. 1990: 21).

The teaching approach advocated in *New Methods in RE Teaching* is nevertheless described as phenomenological, but by this is to be understood, not an objective examination of the external features of religion, but a subjective entering into 'our own and others' personal worlds' (Hammond et al. 1990: 6). The main aims of the religious education teacher should be 'to help pupils to be aware of and to take seriously their own inner experience and their potential to be aware. Hence, learning to respect the inner experience of other people' (Hammond et al. 1990: 17).

At first sight this approach appears to be similar to the experiential models of earlier educationists. Yet the methodology is new. Pupils are not merely to consider the experiences of members of different faiths and seek to engage with them empathetically, an approach recommended by *Working Paper 36*. Rather, they are to discover them for themselves.

New Methods in RE Teaching draws together numerous classroom examples of various aspects of this new experiential approach from some 25 teachers from primary and secondary schools. The exercises described consist largely of techniques to enable pupils to be 'conscious of the moment' through heightened awareness of the senses, to be aware of their inner selves. They might imagine they are an object or an animal, or visualise a pleasant experience. Techniques involve 'stilling' exercises, with concentration on breathing. As the book progresses, such exercises are specifically linked with religious techniques. A breathing exercise is described with the comment, 'In Zen this type of breathing is used almost as a mantra' (Hammond et al. 1990: 83). A lesson aiming to enliven work on the Eightfold Path of Buddhism concludes with the suggestion that a statue of the Buddha might be used to encourage pupils to reflect on the meaning of the lotus position, and to experiment with meditative postures for themselves (Hammond et al. 1990: 89).

The book caused a flurry of controversy expressed, for example, in discussions amongst some of the teacher delegates at the National Conference on Moral and Spiritual Education, University of Plymouth, September 1993. Some hailed it as a way of bringing new life to religious education, others expressed concern that the use of psychological techniques to initiate pupils into spiritual experiences might be

insidiously manipulative. The technique referred to as 'guided fantasy' (Hammond et al. 1990: 153-157) was particularly criticised. In a 'guided fantasy' pupils may be led into a visualised experience of whatever topic the teacher may choose, whether religious or not. Views were expressed that the use of such 'psychological techniques' would be open to abuse, giving teachers the opportunity to inculcate whatever beliefs they might choose. In the Christian context it could be regarded as a return to 'confessionalism'.

The suggestion that 'fantasy' could be used in religious education as a means of encouraging in pupils an awareness of something beyond 'the material' was not new. A whole issue of the *British Journal of Religious Education* (Autumn 1987) was devoted to the subject. Kathryn Raban refers to 'guided imagery', synonymous with 'guided fantasy', as 'a door to the knowledge of the spiritual side of our natures' (1987: 17). Raban draws attention to the dangers of misuse of the technique, the main danger being that of indoctrination into the teacher's own views, whether intentionally or otherwise. Yet she stresses the benefits, regarding guided imagery as 'pointing directions to spiritual experiences', and arguing that the stage of first self-awareness is the stage of first spiritual awareness (Raban 1987: 22).

The authors of *New Methods in RE Teaching* were careful to state that the new approach was not indoctrinatory. They state that the activities described in the book help pupils to 'open their personal awareness' to experiences of the sacred, and 'whilst they point directly at the sources of religious motivation for the believer, still leave open questions of the ultimate truth of religion. They are therefore educational rather than indoctrinatory' (Hammond et al. 1990: 11).

In response to further criticisms (see, for example, Thatcher 1991: 22-27) the leading authors of the book (Hay and Hammond 1992: 145-150) deny providing religious education with the means for manipulating pupils. They claim that the exercises are designed to liberate children from having single vision, opening rather than closing children's minds. They state that the new experiential approach aims to complement the religious education syllabus by helping pupils to relate the recurring common themes of religions to their own feelings and thoughts (Hay and Hammond 1992:

148, 149). These comments suggest that the new approach is merely a development of the older experiential approach to religious education.

Interest in the use of a 'new' experiential approach in religious education persisted in the early 1990s. Brenda Watson (1993: 76), for example, supported the idea of an experiential approach but argued that it should not be so closely tied to 'inwardness'. Watson (1993: 76-85) suggests a broader approach, involving at least six strands. These would include seeing general experience as potentially religious experience, helping pupils to see links between a spiritual dimension and religion, exploring religion through the arts, investigating what is meant by 'spiritual' experience, examining religious understandings of 'spirituality', and studying the spiritual experiences of some of the world's religious mystics.

Heinz Streib (1994: 79-81) proposed an experiential approach that acknowledged the continuation of 'magical feeling and thinking', which he considered to be an essential feature of religion, beyond childhood experience. Streib argued that religious education should not be limited to the promotion of cognitive development but should nurture the continuity of magical thinking into adolescence.

In spite of the flurry of interest in new experiential approaches to religious education, the traditional approaches persisted and predominated in the schools involved in the present research. Conversations with teachers involved in the surveys (see Jennings 1998: 94-114) showed that an experiential approach was understood and practised mainly in terms of linking pupils' experiences with religious material, using a variety of methods. The present research therefore does not specify any particular kind of experiential approach. It will categorise schools with an experiential approach if teachers state that 'experiential' best describes their approach. Following OFSTED's recommendation (1994: 7) to use 'attitude' as a measure of 'development', the present research will then set out to discover whether there is a difference between the spiritual and moral attitudes of pupils in schools with a phenomenological approach to teaching religions and those in schools with an experiential approach.

Summary

Chapter one has reviewed the development of different approaches to religious education in Britain, paying particular attention to government recommendations for religious education. It has identified and described the main characteristics of the eight approaches most likely to be used in non-denominational secondary schools at the time of the research surveys, the mid-1990s. The first two approaches relate to provision for religious education, the second two relate to lesson content, and the remaining four relate to teaching methodology. They are as follows:

1. A minimalist approach, where provision for religious education falls far short of government recommendations, whether in terms of timetable allocations, specialist teachers, or material resources.

2. An 'adequate' approach, where provision for religious education complies with government recommendations, in terms of timetable allocations, specialist teachers, and material resources.

3. An 'in the main Christian' approach, where most attention is given to this requirement of the 1988 Education Reform Act, and less attention is given to the teaching of other religions. This approach tends to place a strong emphasis on biblical studies.

4. A 'world religions' approach, where equal attention is given to the six religions recommended for study by the *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994), additional religions may also be studied, and the 'in the main Christian' requirement of the 1988 Education Reform Act is disregarded.

5. A thematic approach, which although previously used in the context of teaching Christianity tended in the 1990s to be used exclusively in the context of teaching several religions together.

6. A systematic approach, where a number of religions may be taught, but each will be taught separately.

7. A phenomenological approach, where all religions are studied objectively, in terms of their common essential components or dimensions, and there is a tendency to focus upon the public or 'external' expressions of religion.

8. An experiential approach, which might seek to relate religious and/or biblical topics to pupils' own experiences or might focus upon developing pupils'

spiritual awareness, whether religious or otherwise, by means of contemplative exercises.

The chapter has considered the changing aims of religious education and how these have influenced the development of different approaches to the subject. It has discussed the perceived strengths and weaknesses of these approaches in relation to their potential contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. It has then suggested how schools might be categorised according to their approaches to religious education and how the impact of different approaches to religious education on pupils' spiritual and moral development might be assessed.

Since the government of the mid-1990s called for religious education to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, the following two chapters will focus on definitions of 'spiritual development' and 'moral development', and will suggest ways of measuring these aspects of pupils' development.

Chapter Two

Religious education and spiritual development

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Overview

This chapter will consider the issues raised by government recommendations that religious education should play an important part in promoting pupils' spiritual development. First, it will examine legal requirements and government recommendations for religious education and its role in promoting pupils' spiritual development. It will identify from these the kinds of responses that government might view as signs of spiritual development, from both secular and religious perspectives. Secondly, in order to identify further indicators of spiritual development, it will examine a wider literature that views spiritual development from secular perspectives. Thirdly, since the 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', it will examine a wider literature that might identify further indicators of spiritual development, viewed from Christian perspectives.

Legal requirements and government recommendations

An education that contributes to pupils' spiritual development has been legally required since 1944. The 1944 Education Act (section 7) required the local education authority for every area to make available for all pupils an education that would 'contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community'. It seems clear that at the time of the 1944 Education Act 'spirituality' was considered to have a religious basis. *Hansard* (July 1943), for example, records a parliamentary discussion that linked a widespread interest in religious topics with a national need for spiritual leadership, and suggested that the teacher of religion was to have a spiritual relationship with his pupil. It can thus be assumed that teachers of religion were to be responsible for their pupils' spiritual development.

As noted earlier, the 1944 Education Act required religion to be taught in all schools, and although not specified as such, the religion to be taught was Christianity (Durham 1970: 11-15). Pupils' spiritual development would therefore take place in a Christian context. Agreed syllabuses of the 1940s and 1950s made it clear that Christianity was to be taught in such a way as to encourage pupils to encounter Christianity for themselves. The 1949 Cambridgeshire Syllabus, for example, states: 'To teach Christianity to our children is to inspire them with the vision of the glory

of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and to send them into the world willing to follow Him who was among us as one that serveth'. Pupils' spiritual maturity could thus be measured in terms of their Christian discipleship. This view finds support in the wider literature of that era. Bowley and Townroe (1953: 23), for example, describe a child's spiritual training as the process of 'enabling and encouraging the child to share in a corporate experience of Christian living and thus to discover a living faith'. Schools were to teach children to rely on the help and power of God, to pray, and to experience the church's celebrations of the major Christian festivals (Bowley and Townroe 1953: 26-29, 33). Thus, pupils' spiritual development was clearly to be judged in terms of their responses to Christian teaching. Those pupils who adopted Christian practices for themselves could be considered as having been 'spiritually developed'.

Some two decades later, however, a government document drew attention to the fact that the word 'spiritual' was no longer used solely in a Christian context. The *Supplement to Curriculum 11-16* (Department of Education and Science 1977b) argued that the 'spiritual' might be defined in terms of inner feelings and beliefs that affect the way people see themselves and throw light for them on the purpose and meaning of life. It suggested that for some, the spiritual might be concerned with everything in human life that relates to a sense of God or of gods, yet for others it might be concerned simply with human striving and longing for perfection. The document thus indicated that although the word 'spiritual' might still be used and understood in relation to Christianity, it might also be used in relation to religions other than Christianity, or in a non-religious context.

In the years leading up to the 1988 Education Reform Act the question of pupils' spiritual development attracted further government interest. *The Curriculum from 5-16* (Department of Education and Science 1985a) disconnected spirituality from religion altogether. It described 'spiritual education' as being concerned with feelings and convictions about the significance of human life and the world. There was no suggestion that religious education should contribute to this 'spiritual education'.

The disconnection of spirituality from its traditionally religious roots was criticised by some Christian theologians. Parker Palmer, for example, argued that 'there is no such thing as "spirituality in general." Every spiritual search is and must be guided by a particular literature, practice, and community of faith' (Palmer 1983:14).

Michael Grimmitt (1987), although arguing for spirituality to be interpreted in non-religious terms in an educational context, observed that 'the spiritual' defies the normal types of classification accorded to other forms of human awareness or knowledge, particularly when severed from its traditional links with religion. Grimmitt (1987: 134, 135) acknowledges that 'if the spiritual is linked with the religious it can then be articulated (and thus made into a specific category of meaning)'. He continues, 'Without doubt, the traditional religions of the world are ... the greatest repositories of human experience of the spiritual, and they have been the most obvious means by which 'spiritual meaning' and 'spiritual values' have been sustained and expressed within human societies'.

Philip Sheldrake (1987) criticised the spirituality of the 1980s for its preoccupation with inwardness and hence its detachment from its culture and age. Sheldrake (1987:10, 11) calls for spirituality to be 'grounded in a definite theology or set of beliefs about God, the world and humankind', arguing that if we 'underrate the theological roots of spirituality we risk subjectivism and the loss of criteria for judging or discerning our personal religious experience'. Sheldrake (1991:52) points out that the religious traditions have tests for the authenticity of spiritual experience 'based not only on human considerations but also on the revelation or foundational beliefs of the tradition'. He observes that 'Without specific points of reference, it is difficult to say precisely what is spirituality and what is not'.

In spite of these difficulties of interpretation, the 1988 Education Reform Act did not allow the question of pupils' spiritual development to be ignored. It both repeated and expanded the requirements of the 1944 Education Act. It required that a school curriculum should 'promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society' (1988: section 1.2a). Thus the 1988 Education Reform Act required the individual school, rather than the local authority, to 'promote' - a word that suggests positive action on the part of the teacher - the five

(rather than four) named areas of development in both the individual pupil and in 'society'. The addition of the word 'cultural' and the substitution of the word 'society' for 'community' suggested a context wider than merely the local community. It seemed that a school must now, through the promotion of the spiritual development of its pupils, contribute to the spiritual development of the nation.

In the years preceding the Education Reform Act Britain was variously described as predominantly (though privately) Christian (Habgood 1983), religiously pluralist (Department of Education and Science 1985b), and secular (Edwards 1974, Lyon 1985). The word 'spiritual' was now being used in relation to Christianity, to other religions, and in a secular context. If schools were to contribute to the spiritual development of the nation they needed to know what kind of spiritual development would be appropriate.

The National Curriculum Council's (1993a) discussion paper *Spiritual and Moral Development* offered guidance to schools in this matter. The paper stresses that the areas of spiritual and moral development are not confined to religious education and collective worship but can relate to every area of the curriculum and to all aspects of school life (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 2, 6, 7). The paper defines the word 'spiritual' as

> a dimension of human existence which ... applies to all pupils ..., to something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and/or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with relationships with other people and, for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity, ... for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 2).

Although not excluding religion altogether from spiritual development, the paper puts a strong emphasis on a non-religious interpretation of the word 'spirituality'. It states (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 2, 3) that the many aspects of spiritual development include 'beliefs', 'a sense of awe, wonder and mystery', 'experiencing feelings of transcendence', 'search for meaning and purpose', 'self-knowledge', 'relationships', 'creativity', 'feelings and emotions'. 'Beliefs' might include religious beliefs, 'feelings' might 'give rise to belief in the existence of a divine being'. Otherwise aspects of spiritual development might include, for example,

being inspired by the natural world or human achievement, developing a sense of community, expressing innermost thoughts and feelings through art or music, exercising the imagination, or being moved by beauty or kindness. Throughout the list of aspects of spiritual development there is an emphasis on self-awareness.

The discussion paper notes that some people find explanations for such experiences and feelings in the teachings of their religion, and observes that 'there is evidence to suggest that the majority of people in Britain have some belief in God' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 3). In spite of this assertion, the discussion paper does not make any suggestions for promoting the spiritual development of pupils in such a way as to encourage belief in God. Suggested steps to spiritual development include

> recognising the existence of others as independent from oneself; becoming aware of and reflecting on experience, questioning and exploring the meaning of experience; understanding and evaluating a range of possible responses and interpretations, developing personal views and insights, applying the insights gained with increasing degrees of perception to one's own life (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 3).

In a ten-page document on spiritual and moral development which acknowledges the 'in the main Christian' requirement of the 1988 Education Reform Act, the word 'Christianity' appears only once, 'God' twice, and 'religious' or 'religion' just thirteen times apart from references to 'religious education' as a subject in the curriculum. There is no mention of the contribution that Christianity or indeed other religions might make to pupils' spiritual development.

Definitions of spirituality focus upon self-awareness, individualism, one's personal experiences and inner emotions. The discussion paper states that religious education may refer to the teachings of the major world religions, giving most attention to Christianity, but its major role is to be in ensuring that pupils are challenged by 'ultimate questions' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 6). Although the 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', the National Curriculum Council's discussion paper omits to suggest ways in which Christian spirituality might contribute to pupils' spiritual development. The emphases of the discussion paper suggest that religion is to have little place in a pupil's spiritual development.

Further advice on promoting pupils' spiritual development was offered in response to the requirement of the 1992 Education (Schools) Act (section 9.4d) that inspectors report on pupils' 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development'. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) produced a succession of booklets (1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994) to provide guidance and criteria for inspection in these areas. In these it became clear that the area of spiritual development was proving particularly difficult to inspect.

In the discussion paper, *Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development* (1994) OFSTED begins by offering a definition of spiritual development. Citing the definition that had appeared in the revised *Framework for Inspection* (OFSTED 1993a), OFSTED states:

> Spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal existence which are of enduring worth. It is characterised by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non-material dimension to life and intimations of an enduring reality. 'Spiritual' is not synonymous with 'religious'; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development (OFSTED 1994: 8).

Spirituality is thus to be understood in terms of the inner life, the experiential, and the non-material, and it is stressed that 'the spiritual' is to be thought of as something distinct from 'the religious'.

Having defined the 'spiritual', OFSTED confesses that it is difficult to inspect spiritual development. It explains that 'The difficulty of inspecting pupils' "spiritual development" is part of a wider conceptual difficulty. ... if spiritual development is about a unique inner life it is not easy to inspect'. OFSTED (1994: 9) suggests, therefore, that inspectors assess a school's provision for pupils' spiritual development, and this is to be recognised in terms of the school's 'values and attitudes', 'the contribution made by the whole curriculum', 'religious education, acts of collective worship and other assemblies', 'extra-curricular activity, together with the general ethos and climate of the school'.

Although stressing the need for inspectors to focus upon schools' provision for pupils' spiritual development, OFSTED recognises that pupils' responses to that provision need also to be assessed. At this point OFSTED (1994: 9) returns to the theme of the difficulties in evaluating spiritual development, 'where we are concerned with attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour'. The discussion paper asserts that 'what is lacking at present is ... a core of content which might be taken as evidence of spiritual development'. Nevertheless it suggests that pupils might demonstrate, for example,

> knowledge of the central beliefs, ideas and practices of major world religions and philosophies; an understanding of how people have sought to explain the universe through various myths and stories, including religious, historical and scientific interpretations; behaviour and attitudes which derive from such knowledge and understanding and from personal conviction, and which show awareness of the relationship between belief and action; personal response to questions about the purpose of life, and to the experience of, e.g., beauty and love or pain and suffering (OFSTED 1994: 9,10).

OFSTED concludes by suggesting that spiritual concepts can also be explored in history, classical studies, English literature and other subjects, but recognises that for 'other subjects' this may be difficult.

The emphasis throughout this document is upon the difficulties in assessing pupils' spiritual development, and it is made clear that the difficulties spring primarily from the lack of a clear definition of the term. Analysis of the discussion paper reveals a tension between the acknowledgement that spirituality can be linked with religion and the need to separate it from religion, the latter to enable the assessment of the spiritual development of pupils with no religious belief. The main thrust of the thinking enshrined in the discussion paper is that spirituality is to do with an individual's questioning about the meaning of life, and the exploration of one's inner feelings.

If the preceding documents understood 'spiritual development' almost exclusively in secular terms, *Circular 1 94, Religious Education and Collective Worship* (Department for Education 1994) returned it to a religious context. The circular

begins with the statement, 'The Government is concerned that insufficient attention has been paid explicitly to the spiritual, moral and cultural aspects of pupils' development' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 1). Although referring schools to the National Curriculum Council's discussion paper for guidance in their understanding of spiritual and moral development (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 1), *Circular 1/94* stresses that religious education and collective worship are to 'make an important, though not exclusive, contribution to spiritual, moral and cultural development'. The circular states that these activities offer 'explicit opportunities for pupils to consider the response of religion to fundamental questions about the purpose of being, morality and ethical standards'. Moreover, pupils are to learn from religion's responses and from them 'develop their own response to such matters' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4). The circular thus made it clear that spiritual development was to continue to be linked with religious education, although not exclusively so.

Circular 1/94 stressed that the legislation governing religious education was designed to ensure that pupils gained a thorough knowledge of Christianity and a knowledge of the other principal religions represented in Britain, and that from these, pupils were to develop a clear set of personal values and beliefs (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 9). Since Christianity was to be taught 'in the main', it is safe to assume that Christianity was to be the religion to make the main contribution to pupils' spiritual development. For guidance in such matters, the circular referred agreed syllabus conferences to the new national model syllabuses, produced by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

The *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) linked spiritual development clearly with religion. The *Introduction* to the model syllabuses states that religious education should help pupils to 'enhance their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by ... responding to [the fundamental questions of life] with reference to the teachings and practices of religions ... [and by] reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study' (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 4).

One of two 'attainment targets' for religious education is headed 'Learning from religion'. This states that pupils should be able to 'give an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues, reflect on what might be learnt from religions in the light of one's own beliefs and experiences, [and] identify and respond to questions of meaning within religions' (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 7). The model syllabuses suggest specific ways in which pupils may 'enhance their own spiritual and moral development' in the context of 'learning from religion'. For example, Key Stage 3 pupils may enhance their spiritual development by 'considering questions of meaning, e.g. the existence of God and the problem of suffering'. Key Stage 4 pupils may enhance their spiritual development by 'considering the value of silence, prayer, meditation and ritual for human life and for themselves' (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 40, 58).

The suggested programmes of study for each key stage list the topics selected to represent the key beliefs and practices of the six 'principal religions' of Britain. To ensure that the 'in the main Christian' requirement of the Education Reform Act will be met, certain sections on Christianity are to be mandatory in new agreed syllabuses. These sections include the topics or themes identified as central to the Christian faith by the working party for Christianity, members of which were in positions of leadership in all the major Christian denominations. Themes or topics for study are gathered under the headings, 'God', 'Jesus', 'The Church', 'The Bible', 'Christian Ways of Life'. If, as the model syllabuses suggest (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 4), pupils are to 'enhance their own spiritual development' by making their own responses to the teachings of religions, these will be the topics to which, in the context of being taught Christianity, pupils will need to respond.

From this review of the government-sponsored documents of the early 1990s, it seems that government supported the promotion of both religious and non-religious spirituality in the classroom. On the one hand, the National Curriculum Council (1993a) and OFSTED (1994) focused on schools promoting the development of a non-religious spirituality, on the grounds that this would be appropriate to the majority of pupils, who would come from non-religious backgrounds. On the other

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hand, *Circular 1/94* and the model syllabuses (1994) suggested that pupils' spiritual development might be assessed in terms of their responses to religious teachings. There were therefore strong arguments for post-1988 schools to promote both kinds of spiritual development.

Thus, drawing upon the National Curriculum Council (1993a) and OFSTED (1994) documents, measures of secular spirituality might include 'valuing a non-material dimension to life', 'a sense of awe, wonder and mystery', 'being inspired by the natural world or human achievement', 'being creative', 'relating to others'. A major emphasis in this model of spirituality is that of being 'self-aware', having a positive self-image, and developing self-respect.

Drawing upon *Circular 1/94* (Department for Education 1994) and the model syllabuses (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994), measures of religious spirituality might include pupils' responses to religion's answers to 'fundamental questions' such as 'the existence of God', and might also include pupils' attitudes toward prayer, meditation and religious ritual. In the context of 'learning from' Christianity, measures of pupils' spirituality might include pupils' attitudes toward God, Jesus, the Church, the Bible, and Christian 'ways of life'.

In order to confirm and expand the list of items drawn from government documents to measure spiritual attitude, a search was made of a wider literature offering definitions of spirituality or 'spiritual development'. The following section examines examples of a literature that approaches the question of understanding spirituality from a non-religious perspective.

Secular spirituality

Numerous writers outside the educational arena have explored the theme of non-religious spirituality. Rudolf Otto's seminal *Das Heilige*, first published in 1917, defined spiritual experience in terms of 'the numinous', choosing this term to express something beyond 'holiness' or 'the holy', since these terms were used in a strictly

religious and/or ethical context. For Otto, 'the numinous' was something beyond both but with elements of both. He defines 'numinous' first in terms of 'creature-feeling', which he describes as 'the note of submergence into nothingness before an overpowering, absolute might of some kind', and subsequently as 'mystical awe', which is directed towards a 'unique "wholly other" reality and quality, something of whose special character we can *feel*, without being able to give it clear conceptual expression' (Otto 1950: 10, 17, 30). Otto's 'numinous' is thus an awareness of a power beyond oneself, to be understood in non-theistic terms, though commonly sensed and described, according to later chapters in *Das Heilige*, in the context of religious belief and understanding.

Amongst those who have built upon Otto's work, Raymond Holley (1978), for example, describes what he calls 'religious' experience as 'a perception of the invisible world', and defines spirituality in terms of an intangible, non-rational, dynamic force. David Hay (1982, 1990) provides research support for Otto's philosophy. Hay reviews a number of empirical studies of spiritual experience in America and Britain in the 1960s, and his own more recent surveys, conducted in 1976, 1985 and 1986, in Britain. He notes that in these surveys between a third and a half of the sample populations report some sort of experience of transcendence, although they may not describe it in religious terminology. Although both Hardy and Hay consistently refers to 'religious' experience, the experiences recorded by Hay would be better described, in the contemporary context, as 'spiritual experience', since participants in the surveys describe simply an awareness of 'a power beyond themselves'. However, the accounts recorded by Hay show that such experiences were frequently 'triggered' by awareness of beauty in nature, appreciation of or participation in music, art, or drama, or in religious worship, prayer or meditation. Thus spiritual awareness might be experienced in both religious and secular contexts.

In the textbook developed from Hay's researches (Hammond et al. 1990) it is suggested that religion is generally associated with 'external things like buildings, religious officials and public rituals such as weddings or funerals', and spirituality with 'more obviously personal matters like prayer, meditation and love' (1990: 9).

Throughout the book spirituality is described largely in terms of 'inward focusing', 'inner experience', 'inner intention', 'inwardness'.

Michael Grimmitt (1987:125-127) defines spirituality primarily in terms of self-awareness. He argues that the concepts of human spirituality and spiritual development must not be restricted to those that relate to religion, and suggests that a wider meaning of spiritual development might be 'the activation of the human capacity for self-transcendence'. Grimmitt sees 'the spiritual' as an 'irreducible component of human being', with which all are endowed and through which 'they may "intuit" certain "ultimate" values'). Grimmitt (1987:160) argues that 'there can be no doubt that all human understanding of spirituality, including that understanding provided by the great religions of the world, links spiritual development with the growth of self-awareness'. Thus for Grimmitt, spiritual awareness becomes self-awareness, and spiritual development the development of self-awareness and self-understanding.

Derek Webster (1985, in Francis and Thatcher 1990) focuses on the idea of the spiritual as 'mystery', 'what is invisible but not illusory'. Webster (1990: 358) suggests that teachers need to rediscover the sense of mystery in life, stating that when knowledge is perceived to be 'grounded in mystery', the spiritual dimension has been approached. Webster (1990: 360) suggests that teachers need to 'convey a fragment of that mystery which surrounds all being' and that this will not be possible unless they have recognised the mystery of self, have pondered their own being. Thus Webster's notion of 'the spiritual' as 'mystery' moves from a focus on 'knowledge grounded in mystery' to awareness of mystery within self.

The theme of 'mystery' as a central element in spirituality is also found in the writings of Slee (1992: 38-57) and Watson (1993: 80-83). Slee reviews a range of contemporary literature that offers definitions of spirituality, concluding that 'the spiritual' is a dimension of human existence which has to do with the heart and root of personal identity, but which 'transcends personal identity and suggests a mystery, an unseen reality, beyond the life of the individual, pervading the entire world order' (Slee 1992: 46).

For Slee, evidence of spiritual development may be found in

> the extent to which pupils display an awe and reverence for the world in which they live, a thirst for truth and understanding, a recognition of their own unique giftedness and creativity, and a commitment to ongoing self-discovery and relationships with others marked by mutual trust and openness (Slee 1992: 53).

In Slee's writing spiritual development thus embraces positive attitudes toward the natural world and toward others, together with positive attitudes toward self.

Watson (1993: 81, 82) describes spirituality as 'a genuinely different dimension to reality', a mystery in the sense that 'the spirit' is 'beyond our total comprehension'. In suggesting ways of identifying a spiritual dimension in human nature, Watson describes an altruistic and empathetic approach to others, delighting in others' success, giving and wanting nothing in return.

The indicators of non-religious spiritual development found in the writings reviewed above concur with a number of those identified by the National Curriculum Council (1993a). The government's guidelines for pupils' spiritual development and the suggestions of these writers who describe spirituality in non-religious terms will therefore provide the items used in the research surveys to measure pupils' 'secular' spiritual attitudes. These will be grouped first around the notion of spirituality as self-awareness and will include items that measure self-esteem. Secondly, they will be grouped around the notion of spirituality as awareness of a power beyond oneself triggered, for example, by wonder at the natural world or the mystery of life, or in using the creative imagination through the arts, or in being sensitively aware of others.

Christian Spirituality

As noted earlier, an increasing tendency from the 1980s onwards to separate spirituality from religion was criticised by some. The Islamic Academy, for example, in a booklet entitled *Spiritual and Moral Development: a response to the NCC discussion paper*, states:

> We believe that [the NCC discussion paper] underestimates the contribution that the religious traditions can bring to our understanding of the spiritual and so tends to minimise the role of religion as a driving

force towards spiritual and moral development. As the document itself points out, the majority of people in Britain have some belief in God. It, therefore, is unfair to delineate the spiritual in terms which are largely, though not entirely, secular in nature (Islamic Academy 1993: 6).

The booklet contends that all pupils should be helped to see spiritual development as a movement 'from an egocentric form of life towards the divine or transcendental perfection' (Islamic Academy 1993:6). It criticises the lack of recognition of the negative forces in human experience and suggests that the major religious traditions may provide for the development of a strong set of values to counter them. It stresses that pupils should be enabled to understand something of the motivations and inner experiences of the world's religions in order to appreciate what religious experience might contribute to their own development as human beings.

Others argued that both religious and non-religious forms of spirituality are valid in an educational context. Derek Webster (1993: 131), for example, acknowledges that 'the spiritual' can be concerned simply with 'the quality of human experience, speaking of its fullness and its totality'. He argues, however, that a second way of understanding the word 'spiritual' in an educational context is to 'set it within the boundaries of one of the religions', noting that 'Each is an argosy whose richness of experience can contribute to the understanding of all' (Webster 1993: 134).

Whilst OFSTED (1994: 8) insisted that spirituality is not synonymous with religion, in stating that 'spiritual development may be both an aim for religious education and an outcome of it', it suggested that religion might make some contribution to spiritual development. The model syllabuses reinforced this view, and in identifying for study the topics considered to be central to the Christian faith suggested that pupils' spiritual development might be enhanced by studying these topics. The focus of the model syllabuses is, however, on pupils acquiring knowledge of religions. This section will therefore sample a wider literature to determine what Christian writers understand as 'Christian spirituality.

Most significant studies of spirituality approach the subject from historical perspectives. Analysts of the word 'spirituality' identify it as originating in a biblical

context. They then seek an understanding of the word by examining first its biblical usage then tracing the history of its usage in early Christian literature through to the present time.

For example, a collection of essays gathered under the title *The Study of Spirituality* (Jones et al. 1986) examines various types of contemporary spirituality by first outlining the history of each. The book's first essay attributes the origins of what might be understood as 'the spiritual life' to the Old and New Testaments. Drawing on biblical literature, the author describes the spiritual life in terms of an individual's awareness of a relationship with God that is expressed in prayer (Jones 1986: 75). Other essays trace the histories of a wide range of Christian spiritualities, from 'mainstream' spiritualities such as Orthodox spirituality, Catholic spirituality, and Protestant spirituality, to 'minor' or 'thematic' versions such as Celtic spirituality, monastic spirituality, pastoral spirituality, and the like. The book also includes sections on the spiritualities of other religions. Throughout these accounts prayer, doctrine and a God-centred way of life, whether of the individual or of the faith community, are the major evidences of spirituality.

McGinn et al. (1986) trace the development of Christian spirituality from its origins through to the twelfth century. The editors of this collection of specialist essays conclude from this historical survey that Christian spirituality is based upon the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (McGinn et al. 1986: xviii, xix). They note that by the twelfth century Christian spirituality was characterised primarily by doctrinal approaches - 'belief in Christ as redeemer and in the triune God', expressed in prayer and liturgy in the context of the life of the church. (McGinn et al. 1986: xxi, xxii).

A second volume in this series (Raitt 1987) traces the development of Christian spirituality from the twelfth century through to the Protestant Reformation. In a summary of the main features of the spirituality of the High Middle Ages Raitt (1987: xiv) notes that the Byzantine Christians received spiritual sustenance through 'praying and singing in their own language and through hearing the Scriptures'. Similarly, in pointing to Martin Luther as the initiator of the Reformation, Raitt (1987: xx) refers to his 'biblically inspired theology'. She notes too that the roots of

John Calvin's spirituality can be found in 'a single-minded dedication to God nourished by Scripture and founded on faith in Christ and the work of the Spirit' (Raitt 1987: xxi). Thus the Bible provides the doctrinal foundations for the development of Christian spirituality.

Gordon Wakefield (1983: v)) prefaces *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* with the suggestion that for the Christian, the human spirit is linked with the Spirit of God, prayer is the expression of this relationship, and spirituality concerns the way in which prayer influences conduct. The *Dictionary* includes accounts of the spiritualities of Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism alongside a vast range of spiritualities 'of every school and denomination throughout Christian history' (Wakefield 1983: v). All are approached first from historical perspectives, moving through to the contemporary scene. Recurring as indicators of Christian spirituality are the themes of prayer, biblical doctrine, the devotional and practical life of the individual, and the corporate life and traditions of the churches.

Individual writers following this same historical approach have traced similar themes. Philip Sheldrake (1987, 1991), for example, traces the origin of the word 'spirituality' back to its Latin root, 'spiritualitas', a word used to translate the Greek noun for spirit, 'pneuma', and its adjective 'pneumatikos', as they appear in the New Testament Pauline epistles. He defines the 'spiritual' person according to Pauline theology as 'someone in whom the Spirit of God dwells' (Sheldrake 1991: 34, 35). Sheldrake's review of the history of the use of the term leads him to conclude that in the Christian context, 'spirituality is ... concerned with the conjunction of theology, prayer and practical Christianity' (Sheldrake 1991: 52). In an earlier work Sheldrake (1987: 10) argues that 'all spirituality incarnates, at least implicitly, a definite theology or set of beliefs about God, the world and humankind'. Sheldrake's view of Christian spirituality can be summarised as primarily involving prayer, and Christian doctrine and practice.

It seems that most Christian theologians ultimately look to the Bible, either directly or indirectly, as the source of their views on Christian spirituality. W K Grossouw, writing as a Roman Catholic, argues that Catholic tradition is founded wholly upon knowledge and understanding of the Bible, which he describes as 'the foremost

source of our Christian spirituality' (Grossouw 1961: 3). He claims that one can define Christian spirituality by looking first to Jesus' words in the Synoptic Gospels and then to the 'Spirit-inspired, authoritative interpretation of Jesus' words' in the Pauline epistles and the Gospel of John (Grossouw 1961: 9, 10).

Grossouw (1961: 13-83) finds in the Synoptic Gospels a spirituality that is grounded in an understanding of God as Father, awareness of a personal relationship, through Christ, with the Father, and a response to Jesus' commands to abandon old ways and embrace the new ways of God's kingdom. Christian spirituality will thus have ethical components. Grossouw (1961: 87-153) finds in the Pauline epistles a spirituality that involves a personal experience of Jesus, life 'in the Spirit', which involves a continual 'dying to sin', and membership of the Church as the people of God and the body of Christ. Grossouw (1961: 157-187) finds in the Gospel of John a spirituality that involves a personal relationship with Jesus that is founded upon faith and spiritual vision, and belief in Jesus' divinity, redemptive work, resurrection and second coming. Grossouw (1961: 94) summarises the spirituality of the New Testament in terms of a faith in God, faith in Jesus, and love of neighbour. Thus for Grossouw, New Testament spirituality is primarily relational and experiential, but based upon the main doctrines of the Christian faith.

Parker Palmer (1983) understands spirituality through the context of the spiritual life of ancient monastic communities. He concludes that central to the spiritual life are the study of sacred texts, the practice of prayer and contemplation, and the way of life of the religious community (Palmer 1983: 17). Evelyn Underhill (1986: 16-22) focuses on prayer as an indicator of the depth of the spirituality of an individual, seeing it as a means whereby the individual can experience a personal relationship with God, and so be a channel for God's love to act upon others. In a later work she talks of spirituality in terms of both a sense of non-personal cosmic security and a personal relationship with God, particularly in the form of an awareness of the power of the Spirit of God as a source of personal strength (Underhill 1994: 5-10).

A number of writers, for example, Rowan Williams (1990), and the authors of a collection of essays in Waller and Ward (1999), seek to define Christian spirituality by studying the lives and writings of the early Christian saints and martyrs. Williams

finds in such writings a spirituality that is founded upon the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, a Christ-centred spirituality that encompasses suffering and pain, a desire for holiness, and self-sacrificing love. Williams (1990: 180, 181) concludes from his review of the writings of the great Christian saints that there can be no 'spiritual maturation' without an understanding and experience of the themes of crucifixion and resurrection. Christian spiritual development will involve a recognition of the possibility of new life out of negation and despair, a belief that out of suffering will come healing and restoration. Thus, an understanding of Christian spirituality is dependent upon an understanding of the central doctrines of the Christian faith.

From this sample of writers dealing with Christian spiritually, a number of dominant themes emerge. Recurring indicators of Christian spirituality are the devotional life of the individual, with a focus on prayer, a personal relationship with God, the study of sacred texts, and the corporate life and rituals of the Christian community. A further indicator is that of acceptance of 'biblical doctrine'. Succinct statements of the major doctrines of the Christian faith can be found in the creeds, the Anglican '39 Articles of Religion', and the documents of the Vatican Councils. From these various sources, indicators of Christian spirituality include belief in God as Father and Creator, in Jesus as God's Son, and in Jesus' birth to the Virgin Mary, his crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and future return. They include too a belief in the Holy Spirit, in heaven and hell, in an after-life, and in a future judgement. A number of these themes are listed in the model syllabuses (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) as topics for study, hence the foregoing search of Christian literature has both confirmed and extended the range of indicators of spiritual attitude that might be used in the context of teaching Christianity.

Since the government-sponsored documents reviewed above suggested that spiritual development could be understood in both secular and religious terms, The present research will measure pupils' spiritual attitudes from both secular and Christian, as an example of 'religious', perspectives. It will draw on the above-mentioned documents and the samples found in the wider literature to provide items to measure pupils' spiritual attitudes.

Summary

This chapter has examined secular and religious understandings of spirituality in order to identify items that can be used as measures of spiritual attitude. It has analysed government understandings of the word 'spiritual' used in the context of 'spiritual development' and has concluded that government has allowed for both secular and religious interpretations of the word. It has reviewed both government literature and a wider literature in order to identify items that can be used as measures of spiritual attitude. It has concluded by suggesting themes or topics from which items may be drawn to measure pupils' spiritual attitudes, in both religious and non-religious contexts. The next chapter will address the issue of pupils' moral development.

Chapter Three

Religious education and moral development

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Overview

This chapter will consider the issues raised by government recommendations that religious education should play an important part in promoting pupils' moral development. First, it will examine the legal requirements and government recommendations for religious education and its role in promoting pupils' moral development. It will identify from these the kinds of responses that government might view as signs of moral development, from both secular and religious perspectives. Secondly, in order to identify further indicators of moral development, it will examine a wider literature that views moral development from secular perspectives. Thirdly, since the 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', it will examine a wider literature that might identify further indicators of moral development, viewed from Christian perspectives.

Legal requirements and government recommendations

An education that contributes to pupils' moral development, just as to pupils' spiritual development, has been legally required since 1944 (Education Act 1944: section 7). Traditionally, pupils' moral education has been closely linked with religious education. Harold Loukes (1961: 8), for example, comments that 'there remains a widespread belief that religion in some way guarantees morals', and that religious instruction may therefore be good for developing 'moral muscles'. The Durham Report (1970: 84, 91) suggested that Christianity was generally acceptable as the main basis of moral education, and noted that the religious education teacher would have a significant contribution to make to pupils' moral education. Downey and Kelly (1978: 2), noting that the 1944 Education Act made religious instruction the only mandatory subject in the curriculum, argued that this was 'prompted as much by a desire to promote the moral education of pupils as by any intention to propagate the Christian religion'.

Some of the government-sponsored documents that appeared in the years following the 1944 Education Act continued to link religious and moral education. The Plowden Report (1967: paragraph 572), for example, recommended that primary school children should 'be brought to know and love God and to practise in the school community the virtues appropriate to their age and environment', thus

suggesting that the ability of children to 'practise virtues' was to spring from their knowledge and love of God.

Working Paper 36 (Schools Council 1971: 67) noted that in spite of arguments for the autonomy of morality, 'religious and moral education are widely regarded by pupil, parents and teacher as interconnected'. The paper points out that moral codes or principles form an essential part of all religions, and religious education will thus naturally include the ethical dimension in each religion it studies. It suggests, therefore, that although moral education should be a task for the whole school, the religious education teacher has a special contribution to make (Schools Council 1971: 70). The paper draws attention to the influence of Christian ethical teaching on Western morality and on the British legal system, the implication being that the teaching of Christian ethics will be the major influence on British pupils' moral education.

Curriculum 11-16 (Department of Education and Science 1977a: 42) also supported the view that religious education must contribute to pupils' moral development. It states that religious education makes a distinctive contribution to the curriculum in directing attention to the 'central values (many of them derived from religion) which society seeks to uphold and transmit'. The paper notes that 'moral education and religious education are not synonymous terms and the consideration of moral values in schools frequently occurs in other than explicitly religious settings' (Department of Education and Science 1977a: 43). Yet the paper argues that any adequate religious education must nevertheless include discussion of ethical implications that arise from religion. The paper notes that for most children Christianity will be the religion most familiar to them and for that reason, and also because of Christianity's influence on British culture, it should retain a central place in religious education. Again the implication is that schools are to look mainly to the Christian religion as the basis for moral education.

However, a non-religious approach to moral education was introduced into school curricula in the late 1970s and early 1980s via what was initially called 'Personal and Social Education' (PSE), later adding the word 'Moral'. A government review, *Local Authority Arrangements for the School Curriculum* (Department of Education

and Science 1979), revealed that some local education authorities were promoting general courses, often optional and usually for older secondary school pupils, in areas such as social and moral education, and health education. Richard Pring (1984) played a significant role in encouraging teachers to consider seriously the aims, content, planning and evaluating of PSE courses, and by the end of the 1980s 'Personal, Social and Moral Education' (PSME) courses were well established in most county schools. The book *Personal, Social and Moral Education* (Thacker et al. 1987) typifies the approach of the 1980s. In this collection of papers dealing primarily with moral education, with one exception a secular approach is assumed throughout.

As with the case of pupils' spiritual development, the 1988 Education Reform Act both repeated and expanded the requirements of the 1944 Education Act with regard to pupils' moral development. The Education Reform Act (1988: section 1.2a) required the individual school, rather than the local education authority, to 'promote' the moral development of its pupils and of society. This suggested that a school must now, through the promotion of the moral development of its pupils, contribute to the moral development of the nation.

It could no longer be assumed, however, that Christianity would form the basis of pupils' moral development. Since it was argued by some that Britain in the latter half of the twentieth century was a secular country (Hirst 1974, Lyon 1994), it could be argued that religious education should play no part in promoting pupils' moral development. Additionally, it could be argued that if religious education were to contribute to pupils' moral development, the 'other religions' should also make a contribution.

The 1988 Education Reform Act, in requiring that Christianity be taught 'in the main', required by implication a focus upon Christian values. Yet the act did not link the required promotion of pupils' moral development directly with religious education. Therefore, if schools were to contribute to the moral development of the nation, they needed clear guidance as to the particular approaches they were to adopt. This need was made more acute by the Education (Schools) Act (1992: section 9.4d),

which required inspectors to report on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The National Curriculum Council's (1993a) discussion paper *Spiritual and Moral Development* offered to guide schools in their approach to moral development. The discussion paper states that moral development involves several elements. It lists these as 'the will to behave morally as a point of principle', 'knowledge of the codes and conventions of conduct agreed by society', 'knowledge and understanding of the criteria put forward as a basis for making responsible judgements on moral issues', and 'the ability to make judgements on moral issues' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 4). There is no reference to the contribution that religion, and in particular Christianity, might make to pupils' moral development. Instead, pupils' moral development is to be based upon 'the codes and conventions of conduct agreed by society', both statutory and non-statutory.

The paper stresses the need for children to be able to distinguish between right and wrong, and to recognise 'moral absolutes'. It describes 'moral absolutes' first in terms of positive values:

> School values should include: telling the truth; keeping promises; respecting the rights and property of others; acting considerately towards others; helping those less fortunate and weaker than ourselves; taking personal responsibility for one's actions; self-discipline' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 4).

It also describes 'moral absolutes' in terms of negatives: 'School values should reject: bullying; cheating; deceit; cruelty; irresponsibility; dishonesty'. It describes these as 'absolute' values, and urges that 'Schools should be expected to uphold those values which contain moral absolutes' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 4). Yet it offers no grounds for the decision that they are 'absolute', nor criteria for deciding further 'absolute values'.

The paper states that 'Personal morality combines the beliefs and values of individuals, those of the social, cultural and religious groups to which they belong, and the laws and customs of the wider society' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 4). The paper acknowledges that some of these beliefs and values might conflict, and comments that 'children become aware as they grow older that life constantly

throws up situations where right or wrong is not usually agreed'. It lists as examples of topics subject to disagreement 'drinking alcohol, smoking and gambling as well as divorce, abortion and what are called blood sports'. The paper suggests that pupils have to make up their own minds on these and other issues and, in a later paragraph, that pupils have to learn that 'sometimes allowances are made for people who break rules and sometimes not' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 5). Such comments illustrate the dilemmas for teachers seeking to promote a moral development based on personal choices.

Further problems are raised by a number of conflicting statements. The paper observes that 'Values are inherent in teaching. Teachers are by the nature of their profession 'moral agents' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 8). It is stressed that schools must establish their own values and ensure that they are implemented. Pupils are to obey rules and respect authority. Yet 'morally educated school leavers' are to be able to 'articulate their own attitudes and values', 'develop for themselves a set of socially acceptable values and principles, and set guidelines to govern their own behaviour', 'recognise that their values and attitudes may have to change over time', and 'behave consistently in accordance with their principles' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 5). Thus schools and teachers are to be authoritarian but school leavers are to be morally autonomous. The paper ignores the probable outcome of this kind of reasoning. Teachers 'acting as moral agents' are likely to find it difficult to influence teenagers who have learned how to 'articulate their own attitudes and values' and are behaving 'consistently in accordance with their [own] principles', which might be based upon the 'socially acceptable values and principles' of any number of groups other than school.

Although the paper makes no reference to religion in the list of 'elements of moral development', it states that religious education is to play an important part in promoting pupils' spiritual and moral development. This is to be done 'in the light of the teachings of the great world religions', and for schools 'teaching an agreed syllabus in line with ERA, most attention should be given to Christianity' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 6). Since this is the only reference in the paper to Christianity, it suggests that the teaching of Christianity is not, in reality, expected to make any major contribution to pupils' moral development. This view is confirmed

by a further statement that pupils should 'be challenged by hearing the claims to truth offered by people with a different religious, or philosophical perspective on life' (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 6). This indicates that moral values are to be debated rather than agreed.

However, the paper goes on to say that school staff and governors need to agree on 'core values acceptable to all'. This assumes that there will be a consensus of views on all moral issues. The paper does not offer advice for cases where there is no agreement. Thus, although recommended as guidance for teachers, the paper demonstrates that with only the basis of 'consensus', dealing with moral development is likely to be a very difficult area.

Since pupils' moral development was to be included in school inspections, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) also offered guidance. In the discussion paper *Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development* (OFSTED 1994), OFSTED paid most attention to the area of moral development. The paper begins with the statement: 'This publication is unashamedly about values'. It continues, 'Education cannot … be expected to fill a moral vacuum. But it can …help those who receive it to make better sense of what is nowadays often termed the "moral maze"' (OFSTED 1994: 1). The paper quotes an earlier definition of 'moral development' (OFSTED 1992, 1993) as 'referring to pupils' knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is right or wrong' (OFSTED 1994: 10). It continues (OFSTED 1994: 10,11) by stating that pupils must, as 'autonomous moral agents', acquire their own value-systems, yet schools must provide young people in their early years 'with a moral framework within which to operate'. Schools must help pupils to 'decide what they hold as right and wrong, why they do so, and how they should act'.

The paper acknowledges that there are difficulties in determining a basis for moral behaviour, but urges schools to address the question. It suggests that the bases for moral belief may be linked to religious beliefs, or may be the 'intuitionist approach, utilitarianism, [or] existentialist thought', or a mixture of these. The paper stresses the difficulties in determining a basis. 'Always, the argument comes back to "what values?" and "whose values?"' (OFSTED 1994: 11). The paper criticises the 'value-

neutral' stance of the 1960s, and urges that, although teachers must avoid expressing their own views in a way that 'risks coming perilously close to indoctrination', teachers must take a 'clear and consistent stand on questions of morality'.

As with the issue of spiritual development, the paper raises a number of questions and stresses the difficulties rather than providing answers. It appears to draw upon several philosophical approaches to moral education, then abandons its own efforts to find a way through the 'moral maze'. Instead, it commends the moral values listed in the National Curriculum Council (1993a) discussion paper on spiritual and moral development, on the grounds that there is a reasonable degree of consensus that these constitute a 'core of desired moral values and behaviour, irrespective of ethical theory' (OFSTED 1994: 12). At the same time it is stressed that schools should declare their own stance and encourage pupils to develop their own values. The paper thus oscillates between encouraging schools to teach what it identifies as consensually acceptable values, and the proposal that schools and individuals find their own values. Such suggestions assume that teachers and governors will agree on all issues, that all schools will present pupils with values that are acceptable to the wider society, and that society will agree on all moral issues.

The paper raises a further problem in observing that, even when morally 'mature, autonomous and responsible', pupils may nevertheless often act irrationally (OFSTED 1994: 13). The paper suggests therefore that neither teachers nor inspectors will be able to assess pupils' state of progress in moral development. Nevertheless the paper presses on with a list of possible 'evidences' of moral development. Pupils are to display 'knowledge of the language and ideas of morality', 'understanding of the nature and purpose of moral discussion', 'personal values in relation to the self', 'relationships with others' and 'local, national and world issues', and finally, 'the disposition to act and behave in accordance with such values'. Personal values relating to 'the self' include such aspects as self-awareness, self-esteem, self-reliance, self-respect and self-discipline. In the National Curriculum Council's discussion paper these are listed as aspects of spiritual development. Here they are listed as aspects of moral development.

Personal values relating to 'relationships with others' include such qualities as tolerance, respect for persons and property, truthfulness, compassion and love. Personal values relating to 'local, national and world issues' include reference to such issues as exploitation and aid, medical ethics, environmental issues and equal opportunities (OFSTED 1994: 13, 14). In some cases (such as tolerance, respect for persons and property, truthfulness) there is clear guidance as to what might be considered morally desirable, in others (such as medical ethics, environmental issues) there is none.

The OFSTED discussion paper thus raises more questions than it gives answers. The paper offers no clear basis for making moral judgements, instead stressing that schools must develop their own moral values, on whatever bases they might choose. It appears that OFSTED itself lacked the ability to decide upon any clear basis for moral education. It is also clear that OFSTED did not expect schools to look to religious education to provide such a basis.

However, *Circular 1/94* presented a different view. As noted earlier, *Circular 1/94* begins by describing government concern at a lack of attention to the spiritual, moral and cultural aspects of pupils' development (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 1), and asks schools to address the problem. Whilst listing three aspects of development the focus is immediately on the moral element, 'moral' described in terms of 'values' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 2). The circular states that schools are to promote a set of 'shared values'. These are to be promoted 'through the curriculum, through expectations governing the behaviour of pupils and staff and through day to day contact between them' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 2). This set of shared values is to be 'at the heart of every school's educational and pastoral policy and practice', and furthermore, 'Every attempt should be made to publicise the school's values to parents and to the local community, and to win support for them' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 2). This issue of 'shared values' is of such importance that schools are to include in their prospectuses 'a statement of their ethos or shared values' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 3).

Placed as they are at the beginning of this circular, these paragraphs show that government concern for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development focused very strongly upon the moral element. Schools are to take seriously their responsibility to act as major agents in improving the moral values of the local community, and thence, in the light of the 1988 requirement, the moral values of society in general. Unlike the two previous documents, the circular stresses that religious education and collective worship are to make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, since they will 'offer explicit opportunities for pupils to consider the response of religion to fundamental questions about the purpose of being, morality and ethical standards, and to develop their own response to such matters' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4). This suggests that pupils are to model their own responses to moral issues on religious responses to moral issues.

The circular continues with assurances that government aims to improve the quality of the religious education curriculum for pupils (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 5), and quickly returns to the theme of moral development. It states, 'The Government also attaches great importance to the role of religious education and collective worship in helping to promote among pupils a clear set of personal values and beliefs' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 9). Again, morality is described in terms of 'values', and in this instance a value to be promoted is identified, namely, 'respect for and understanding of those with different beliefs and religious practices from their own'. This particular 'value' appears to be of major importance. In the paragraph headed 'Aims of RE', two of the aims relate to compliance with legal requirements for religious education, the third is that religious education is to 'encourage respect for those holding different beliefs' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 16).

A few pages later, the circular returns again to the theme that religious education must concern itself with moral issues. Immediately following the reminder that 'As a whole and at each key stage, the relative content devoted to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35), the circular states:

In the Department's view the syllabus should not be confined to information about religions and religious traditions, practices and teaching, but extend in a religious context to wider areas of morality, including the way in which people's religious beliefs and practices affect their understanding of moral issues and the consequences their behaviour has upon the family and society (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 36).

This suggests a criticism of the dispassionate detachment of the phenomenological approach to studying religions, but the criticism does not lead, as might be expected, to a recommendation of experiential teaching methods. Instead, it leads to the suggestion that religion is to be seen as a basis for moral attitude and behaviour. In view of the fact that the preceding paragraph states that the content devoted to Christianity in the syllabus is to predominate, it seems that Christian responses to moral issues are to play an important part in shaping pupils' moral development.

Circular 1/94 repeatedly suggests that religions provide answers to moral issues, and pupils are to consider modelling their own values on these answers (Department for Education 1994: paragraphs 4, 9, 36). The circular ignores the possibility that different religions may have different moral values, though stresses that Christianity must be taught 'in the main'. Whilst implying that Christian values will play an important part in shaping pupils' moral values, the circular also ignores the possibility that Christians may have different views on some moral issues. It makes no suggestions as to the particular moral values that pupils might consider, with one exception, namely, 'respect for those holding different beliefs' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 16).

The *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) offer a little more guidance on the contribution of religion to pupils' moral development. The *Introduction* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 4) recommends that religious education should help pupils to 'develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues'. In particular, pupils are to be helped to 'develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions' (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994: 4). As in *Circular 1/94*, it seems that the main concern

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in the area of morality is for tolerance towards diversity, and particularly religious diversity.

However, the model syllabuses identify some of the topics that represent the ethical teachings of the selected religions, implying that these are worthy of commendation. Love for God and neighbour is presented as the basis of Christian ethical teachings, for all key stages. There are references to the Sermon on the Mount and the ten commandments at Key Stage 2, references to specific topics such as work, crime, care for the environment, and poverty at Key Stage 3, and references to violence, aggression and racism at Key Stage 4. However, the majority of recommended topics throughout the key stages centre on the nature of God, events in Jesus' life, Christian beliefs, the Church, and the Bible as the sacred writings of the Christian faith. Very little space is given specifically to the ethical dimension of the Christian religion.

Thus, to conclude this review of the government-sponsored documents of the early 1990s, it can be argued that government supported the promotion of pupils' moral development in both religious and non-religious contexts. On the one hand, the National Curriculum Council (1993a) and OFSTED (1994) focused on schools promoting moral development without reference to religion, looking instead to the notion of consensus. On the other hand, *Circular 1/94* insisted that religious education should extend to dealing with moral issues, and the model syllabuses (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) included a small number of ethical topics in their lists of topics for study.

In order to assess pupils' moral attitudes there is a need to identify items that can be used as measures. Drawing upon the National Curriculum Council (1993a) and OFSTED (1994) documents, measures of 'secular' morality might include telling the truth, respecting the rights and property of others, helping those less fortunate and weaker than ourselves, and rejecting bullying, cheating, deceit, and cruelty. Indicators of personal morality might include self-awareness, self-esteem, self-reliance, self-respect and self-discipline. In relation to local, national and world issues, moral development might be measured in terms of attitude toward such issues as exploitation and aid, medical ethics, environmental issues and equal opportunities.

Drawing upon *Circular 1/94* and the model syllabuses (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994), measures of religious morality might include respect for the beliefs of others, love for God and neighbour, and the ethical teachings found in the ten commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.

In order to confirm and expand the list of items drawn from government documents to measure moral attitude, a search was made of a wider literature that seeks to define 'moral development'. The following section examines examples of a literature that approaches the question of defining moral development without reference to religion.

Secular morality

A review of literature that approaches moral development from secular perspectives reveals that the literature is governed by the belief that there are no moral absolutes. Morality is believed to be a matter of individual choice determined, as noted earlier (see OFSTED 1994: 11), according to a number of different approaches. Perhaps the most significant early developments in Britain in the field of 'moral education', as it was called prior to the 1988 Education Reform Act, came from the research unit set up in 1965 by the Farmington Trust to 'inquire into moral education from a neutral standpoint' (Durham 1970: 74). The director of the research unit, John Wilson, and colleagues (Wilson et al. 1967) approached the question of moral development by proposing a way of identifying the characteristics of a morally mature person. They drew up a list of moral components, suggesting that these would need to be developed and put into action if a person was to become morally mature (Wilson et al. 1967: 191-198). These included the ability to identify and empathise with others, to recognise the consequences of one's actions, to formulate from these moral components a set of rules and principles, and to act upon them and live by them. This, it was believed, would result in morally autonomous individuals, their moral values determined on rational grounds. This approach to moral education was from a neutral perspective, since the overall aim was to provide a means for promoting moral development that could be used in the context of any value system, whether secular or religious. Such an approach did not, however, propose any specific moral values.

Whilst Wilson et al. addressed the question of moral education from a neutral perspective, other writers focused on the issue of whether or not religion should provide the basis for moral education. In his preface to *Let's Teach Them Right* Macy (1969), for example, outlines the controversies of the 1960s, contrasting the anti-religious views of 'militant atheists' with the evangelistic approaches of 'evangelical Christians' (Macy 1969: vii). Macy wanted to encourage the view that the relationship between religious and moral education was not one of hostility but of dialogue. He therefore drew together a number of papers presenting both Christian and humanist viewpoints.

However, in the *Introduction* Blackham (1969: 7) deals with the issues by arguing that because young people must be enabled to think for themselves, teachers' appeal to authority and tradition, whether religious or otherwise, must be abandoned. In contrast, Hinton (1969: 81) notes that moral education can be given independently of a Christian context, but nevertheless argues that no morality 'can be intellectually justified without reference to the questions which religion tries to answer'. Hemming and Marratt (1969: 165) propose that both Christians and humanists should contribute to moral education in state schools. They suggest that each will be tolerant of the others' views, and that children's moral insight will be best developed by presenting them with a variety of common and differing viewpoints.

Whereas this collection of essays aimed to encourage both secular and religious approaches to moral education, in the 1970s and 1980s criticisms of the linking of religious with moral education began to take greater prominence. Writers increasingly expressed the view that appeals to a religious, and particularly a Christian, basis for morality were unacceptable.

Paul Hirst (1974: 24), for example, questions the validity of a morality based on religious grounds, arguing that many people do morally good actions without any reference to religious belief. In a collection of nineteen papers on moral education (Taylor 1975) only four suggest that religious education might make a contribution to pupils' moral education, and these stress throughout that teachers must make it clear that they are teaching Christian ethics in the context of teaching Christianity. They are not to give the impression that they are giving moral education *per se*.

Downey and Kelly (1978: 6-8) argue that the authoritarian nature of religious morality denies individuals the right to choose their own moral principles, and does not allow for the development of moral understanding in the context of changing social circumstances. They suggest that the moral educator must teach pupils how to think rather than what to think. Teachers are to be neutral with regard to pupils' conclusions on moral issues (Downey and Kelly 1978: 18).

A decade later it was possible to identify three common approaches to moral education. These could be described as 'values clarification', 'situation ethics' and 'critical issues' (Hare 1987: 99). The 'values clarification' approach proposed that children should be allowed to choose their own set of values from the many held by society. All values would be considered equally acceptable. The 'situation ethics' approach suggested that each situation should be considered individually, and the weighing of one situation against another would allow circumstances to change or modify an existing moral principle. Hare criticises both these approaches, supporting instead what he terms the 'critical issues' approach. This proposed that moral education should focus on controversial issues, giving pupils opportunities to discuss, reason and change their moral principles. Teachers were to adopt a neutral position in such activities. Religion had no part in any of these approaches.

Approaches that failed to define specific criteria for deciding moral values, and at the same time rejected the contribution that religious belief might make, faced criticism from a number of different perspectives (see, for example, Priestley 1987, Elias 1989, Thatcher 1996). Yet although there has been increasing government interest since the 1988 Education Reform Act in 'values education' (see, for example, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 1997), the contribution that religion, and in particular Christianity, might make to moral development has been completely ignored.

To summarise this section, the foregoing review of secular approaches to moral education, or moral development as it was later called, has shown that these approaches deal with process rather than content. They focus on the development of reasoning skills rather than recommend ideologies, whether religious or otherwise, that will offer good moral values. Since they recognise no established bases for

morality, they offer few, if any, references to individual moral issues, and few, if any, measures of moral attitude.

In order to find measures of moral attitude it therefore becomes necessary to refer to particular ideologies. Since the present research focuses on Christianity as the main religion to be taught in religious education, the next section will review the writings of a number of Christian writers in order to identify Christian approaches to moral issues.

Christian morality

Religions primarily use their sacred writings to inform their moral attitudes. For example, Muslims find in the Qur'an the Sharī'a, the Islamic Law which shapes the moral life of both society and the individual, whilst Jews find in the Torah not only the ten commandments but also over six hundred rules for living (Smart 1989: 17). Smart suggests that both narrative and doctrine shape the values of a religious tradition, and observes that the central ethical attitude in the Christian faith is love. Understanding of this ethic is to be found not only in Jesus' teaching, but also in the narrative of Christ's life and death, and the relational idea of the Trinity. Thus for Smart, the ethical dimension of Christianity is to be found by studying primarily the doctrines and narratives of the New Testament.

Beach and Niebuhr (1973) argue too that the Bible provides the primary foundation for Christian ethics, although they point to the difficulty of providing a coherent summary statement of biblical morality. They attribute this difficulty partly to the fact that the sixty-six books of the Bible were written over a period of fifteen hundred years, to meet changing cultural circumstances. Nevertheless they assert that 'the unity of Scriptures in moral teaching ... is more impressive and effective than its diversity' (Beach and Niebuhr 1973: 11-13). For a summary of the 'essence of God's requirements and of human duties' they refer to the ten commandments, together with the Old Testament verse (Micah 6: 8) 'This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this: that you act justly, that you love tenderly, that you walk humbly with your God'.

A number of Christian writers consider this verse from the prophet Micah foundational to an understanding of Christian ethics. Donal Dorr (1984: 8), for example, interprets spirituality in terms of moral action. Dealing with the requirement to 'Walk humbly with your God', Dorr (1984: 9) suggests that a person needs to be 'religiously converted' in order to experience God's love and so identify with God's care for others. In relation to the requirement to 'love tenderly', Dorr (1984: 13) suggests that a person needs to be 'morally converted', in order to have the gift of being 'other-centred, genuinely interested in other people'. In relation to the requirement to 'act justly', Dorr draws attention to the injustices of present societies, in particular the inequalities between rich and poor, one of the major themes of the Book of Amos. Dorr (1984: 15) concludes that Christian morality is primarily concerned with love for others and justice for the poor and the disadvantaged.

Philip Sheldrake (1987: 17) suggests that reconciliation with God, through Jesus Christ, leads to reconciliation with our fellow human beings, and hence to love of neighbour. Sheldrake (1987: 46 - 47) draws upon the teachings of St Ignatius Loyola that focus upon 'finding God in all things', balanced with the spirituality of the Cross, which involves identification with a suffering Christ, a Christ who is poor and homeless. Thus for Sheldrake as for Dorr, morality involves a love for God that leads to love for others, particularly the disadvantaged in society.

Kenneth Leech (1993), a parish priest working in the East End of London amongst some of the most economically deprived people in British society, finds a basis for his ethical stances in 'the prayerful and meditative use of the Bible' (Leech 1993: 196). Leech focuses upon a 'Kingdom of God theology', drawing on both Old and New Testaments to explain the meaning of Kingdom theology. In this approach Christian morality is expressed in terms of working for justice in society and liberation for the poor and oppressed.

Dorr, Sheldrake and Leech, basing their moral attitudes primarily on biblical teachings, define Christian morality in terms of general issues of justice and compassion. Other Christian writers focus on more specific moral issues, again

drawing on the Bible, or on established Christian traditions or Church Law as a basis for their moral views.

Matthew Fox (1981, 1991), for example, focuses on environmental issues. Fox (1981: 12) refers to the Bible as the basis for his attitude toward the environment, and addresses issues relating to the damage caused by exploitation of the earth's resources. Fox (1991: 9) defines 'sin' as abuse of the created world – 'war against ourselves, our bodies, our youth, our soil, our trees'. (Fox 1991:112) calls for a new economic vision, no longer based on the greed of capitalism and consumerism, but based on 'creation spirituality', a spirituality which, he believes, will inspire business and commerce to 'serve and not pollute our spiritual and physical environments'. Similarly, Thomas Berry (1990: 154) develops a theory of the 'spirituality of the earth', that decries the exploitation of the earth's resources and instead, calls for a recognition of the 'numinous qualities of the earth'. For Fox and Berry, Christian spirituality and morality are intertwined, and provide clear foundations for attitudes toward environmental issues.

Herbert Waddams (1972) addresses a wider range of issues, such as marriage and sex, the use of force, the sanctity of life, and problems of wealth. Within these general categories, Waddams deals with such topics as divorce, contraception, justice and punishment, nuclear weapons, hunting, temperance, strikes, gambling, and property. He appeals to Anglican and Roman Catholic Canon Law, Papal Encyclicals, and other statements of church policy as the bases for moral attitudes toward the specific moral topics, and derives from these clear moral judgements.

In more recent years numerous writers have used the Bible as a resource for addressing the increasingly complex moral issues of the late twentieth century. Norman Geisler (1989), for example, cites the Bible as the authority on what is morally right or wrong for Christians, on the grounds that Christians believe that God has revealed his will in Scripture. Geisler deals with the issues of abortion, euthanasia, biomedical questions, capital punishment, war, civil disobedience, homosexuality, marriage and divorce, and ecology. In each case he describes a range of different views, then examines each issue in the light of a wide range of Bible passages. Geisler (1989: 17) argues that 'God has not limited himself to revelation in

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Scripture but also has a general revelation in nature', and that therefore there will be similarities and overlaps between God's supernatural and natural revelations. In quoting Romans 1: 19-20; and 2: 12-14, verses that refer to God's laws being written by nature on human hearts and consciences, Geisler suggests that the moral judgements offered by the Christian Scriptures can be applied to all.

Bernard Hoose (1998: xi) notes that most Christian ethicists now accept that there are several sources of 'ethical wisdom', the main ones being reference to natural law, 'our own reasoning powers and sensitivities', and the findings of science. Yet he notes too that the Bible is still accepted as the main source of moral authority, by Protestants and Roman Catholics alike. Hoose gathers together the writings of twelve experts in particular areas of ethics, with the aim that they should present Christian perspectives on the selected topics. Topics include such issues as justice, property, morality and law, sex, sexuality and relationships, and truth and lies. The writers draw mainly on the teachings of the churches, looking to the various church pronouncements to provide bases for moral judgements, but in most cases referring to the Bible as the source of the churches' judgements. In most areas references to the Bible or official church pronouncements give clear guidelines for moral decisions.

Whilst the last two books present a wide range of ethical issues and suggestions for moral decision-making, the *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Atkinson and Field 1995), with well over seven hundred articles and some three hundred contributors, deals with an enormous range of ethical issues. Issues are approached from a wide range of perspectives, but most refer ultimately to the Bible or church teachings as the major sources of Christian moral authority. In most cases, Bible or church teachings offer clear moral statements, or lay down clear principles from which moral judgements may be derived.

The model syllabuses (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) state that pupils are to learn not only *about* Christianity but also *from* Christianity. The present research therefore uses the ethical teachings of the churches and the Bible to provide measures of moral attitude. Since the wider Christian literature covers such a great range of ethical issues, the textbooks most widely used in the schools involved in the

surveys were used to select topics to be included in the present research. The most commonly recurring topics were grouped under such headings as 'personal, social and global issues', or 'personal relationships, property, and the environment'. The most commonly found topics related to personal choices on issues that might not be judged immoral according to the law, but might cause hurt or harm to self or to others. Most prominent among these were issues relating to sex, drugs, and the environment. Some items chosen to measure pupils' moral attitudes were selected because the Bible or church documents provided clear moral judgements. Some items were selected from the lists of 'secular' values found in the National Curriculum Council (1993a) and OFSTED (1994) discussion papers. Thus items representing both secular and religious approaches to pupils' moral development were included in the questionnaires as measures of pupils' moral attitudes.

Summary

In order to identify items that can be used as measures of moral attitude this chapter has examined secular and religious approaches to the question of moral development. It has analysed government approaches to 'moral development' and has noted that government has focused mainly on a 'secular' approach to the issue. It has therefore drawn mainly on government-sponsored documents to provide items that can be used to measure pupils' moral attitudes from secular perspectives. It has responded to suggestions that religion should make a contribution to pupils' moral development by drawing mainly on literature dealing with Christian ethics to provide items that can be used to measure pupils' moral attitudes from religious perspectives. It has concluded by suggesting a number of themes or topics from which items may be drawn to measure pupils' moral attitudes.

Chapter Four

Research in religious education and spiritual and moral development

Overview

Over the years school-based research has provided a means whereby educational failings and their causes may be identified and strategies proposed for remedying areas of weakness. The government of the early 1990s stated that it considered that schools were failing to pay sufficient attention to pupils' spiritual and moral development, and identified religious education as the major source of failure (Department for Education 1994: paragraphs 1 and 5). The present research responds to government concerns by seeking to discover how the state-maintained secondary schools of the 1990s dealt with religious education, how the subject affected pupils' spiritual and moral development, and whether or where there were failings or weaknesses.

By reviewing the relevant literature the preceding chapters have identified eight different approaches to the religious education of the mid-1990s, and a number of ways of defining 'spiritual development' and 'moral development'. This chapter will address the question of the research methodology best suited to the task of assessing the impact of different approaches to religious education on pupils' spiritual and moral development. It will do this by reviewing the development of empirical research in religious education, paying particular attention to research studies relevant to the present research. It will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of earlier studies, and will evaluate their research methodologies.

Research in religious education: laying the foundations

Although the 1944 Education Act made religious instruction the only mandatory subject in the school curriculum, a decade later concerns were being expressed that approaches to the subject were too academic and paid little attention to pupils' needs. In response to these concerns, the Institute of Christian Education (1954) initiated research into provision for religious instruction, curriculum content and the effectiveness of post-1944 teaching in terms of pupils' retention of knowledge. The Institute drew together seven separate studies, some involving questionnaire surveys, some interviews, and some both, in a variety of different types of schools. The approach was not systematic but the various researches provided valuable information. The overall findings of the different studies indicated, for example, that

although timetable allocations for religious instruction were generally adequate there was a serious dearth of specialist teachers, appropriate textbooks, Bibles, and audio and visual aids (Institute of Christian Education 1954: 131-134). The treatment of biblical material, which formed the main body of content for all post-1944 agreed syllabuses for religious education, was considered too academic and wide-ranging, leading to superficiality, irrelevance and confusion (Institute of Christian Education 1954: 119, 120). Retention of religious knowledge was found to be generally poor.

These research findings suggested a need for further research. In 1958 the Institute of Christian Education set up a study group, chaired by Harold Loukes, then Reader in Education at the University of Oxford, to investigate the state of religious education in secondary modern schools at the end of the 1950s. Loukes (1961: 9) states that his concern was not with retention of knowledge but with 'how far Christianity makes sense to [the fourteen year old school leaver], and helps him to make sense of his own human condition'. Loukes' initial method of research was to arrange for the teacher to tape-record discussions held by fourteen-year-olds in six secondary modern schools during their normal religious instruction lessons. Loukes was impressed by the sincerity and frankness of those contributing to the discussions, but realised that he knew nothing of the views of those who did not speak. He therefore selected a number of typical quotations from the transcripts of the discussions and submitted them to 502 pupils, drawn from the original six schools and eight additional ones, for their written comments. Pupils were asked to agree or disagree with some of the earlier pupils' remarks about, for example, the character of God, belief in Jesus, belief in the Bible, life after death, the problem of suffering, prayer, going to church, and religious instruction. Pupils were also asked to add their own comments.

Loukes concluded that the replies were self-consistent but varied greatly one with another, indicating that these teenagers had thought carefully and had formed their own opinions. He concluded too that these teenagers were interested in religion, but wanted a religious education that would be more relevant to their personal concerns. Loukes' findings identified the need to develop a form of religious education that would be relevant to pupils' interests and concerns. Loukes next asked a number of teachers to identify the main 'problems in their own condition' about which pupils

expressed concern. Loukes then consulted earlier researches into the 'developmental tasks' necessary for adolescents in the process of maturing, and from these findings devised a method of Bible-based 'problem solving' (Loukes 1961: 100-104). His researches thus led to the development of a new approach to religious education.

Loukes (1965) continued his researches by developing more fully a quantitative approach. He attempted to carry out a questionnaire survey of some 500 secondary schools in England and Wales where religious education was deemed by various educational bodies to be 'particularly successful'. From these, 50 schools were randomly selected to be used in a questionnaire pilot study and 34 responded. This led to a modification of the questionnaire. The remaining 450 schools were sent a revised questionnaire, with a 60% response rate. Following visits to a number (unspecified) of these schools, 11 schools were asked to allow their pupils to work a series of tests. The findings confirmed and expanded the results of Loukes' earlier researches. This later research is of particular value since Loukes draws attention to the difficulties in conducting valid research in religious education. Recognising the influences of the general ethos of the school, home and the wider cultural environment, he indicates the need to be able to isolate variables, and concludes that without this facility, his findings can only be descriptive (Loukes 1965:15-17).

Loukes' researches provided a model for further research in religious education. They revealed the value of open-ended interviews in that, when carried out by the regular teacher in a normal classroom situation, they could provide an insight into what pupils really think. Topics for study in future religious instruction lessons could then be made relevant to pupils' interests. However, Loukes himself identified weaknesses in this approach. He recognised the need to hear all pupils' views, and so subsequently asked for written responses to questions. He recognised the need to define the research question more clearly, and so he questioned the teachers. He consulted earlier research, and enlarged the size of his sample.

Loukes' researches reveal the limitations of interview surveys, and hint at the difficulties in collating responses to open-ended questions. They show the value of questionnaire surveys, of piloting the questionnaire, and of learning from previous

research. Of further value for future research was the indication of the need for the development of more sophisticated techniques in quantitative research.

Frank Garrity (1960, 1961) pre-dated Loukes in his use of questionnaires in a large-scale survey designed to discover pupils' attitudes toward religious education in secondary modern schools. In an initial study (1960) involving pupils aged 11-15 he had found that teachers believed pupils to be interested in religious education. Recognising the subjectivity of teachers' judgements, Garrity (1961) sought a more objective approach. He constructed an attitude scale to measure pupils' attitudes toward religious education and administered it to the complete population of all secondary modern schools except for one Roman Catholic school, in one county borough. His sample comprised 4,040 pupils in eight schools. His attitude scale of 22 statements used the Thurstone and Chave (1929) technique and a pupil's score was calculated as the mean of the statements a pupil endorsed. The value of Garrity's research lies in a number of facts. His sample was very highly representative of the population he chose to study, he devised a measuring instrument that provided for objectivity, and he used research procedures that were well established in the fields of social psychology and statistical analysis and therefore respected.

Further significant research in religious education was undertaken by Ronald Goldman (1964, 1965). The theoretical framework for Goldman's work was based upon Jean Piaget's (1932) theory that human mental development passes through a series of sequentially invariant stages. Goldman assumed that religious thinking developed in the same way as any other kind of thinking, so based his researches on the assumption that religious understanding would, between the ages of six and seventeen, move from an intuitive stage to a concrete operational stage to a formal (abstract) operational stage. In his research Goldman used the clinical interview technique, that is, interviewing on a one-to-one basis following a pre-determined sequence of questions. Goldman (1964: 34, 35) argues that this method minimises literacy problems and provides for an in-depth exploration of answers to questions.

In his final sample Goldman interviewed 200 pupils of mixed ability, aged from six to seventeen. The material used as the basis for discussion consisted of three Bible

stories, each involving a supernatural dimension, and three pictures, one of a family going to church, one of a child praying, and one of a damaged Bible. Goldman's analyses of the interviews suggested that religious thinking indeed follows the Piagetian model, developing through an invariant sequence of stages during childhood and adolescence. Goldman concluded that children are unable to think in abstract terms until around the age of thirteen, with the beginnings of formal operational thinking. He argued that prior to this stage, children are incapable of grasping theological concepts, hence much of the Bible is suitable as teaching material only when the child is capable of thinking in abstract rather than literal terms (Goldman 1964: 230).

Goldman's research has been criticised on a number of counts. For example, Francis (1979a) argues that 'religious thinking' comprises 'thinking about religion', 'thinking religiously', and 'thinking in religious language', three different constructs requiring three different research methods. Slee (1986) criticises Goldman's use of content analysis and scalogram analysis to substantiate his theory of religious thinking development. Kay (1996: 36) points out that religion is not a unitary phenomenon but can be divided into several dimensions (c.f. Smart 1969, 1989). Each needs to be researched independently of each other and independently of the Piagetian model. A further criticism would be that the sample was too small to allow for generalisations.

Goldman's research was nevertheless of great value. It reinforced Loukes' conclusion that religious education needs to be relevant to pupils' interests. This led Goldman to draw up a series of lesson plans, using a methodology he described as 'teaching by life-themes' (Goldman 1965: 110), a child-centred approach that sought to make religious education relevant to pupils' needs, interests and cognitive abilities. It also stimulated a substantial volume of further research in the field of religious education.

Kenneth Hyde's work was significant in that it made a valuable contribution to the approach that sought to apply the techniques of social psychology to quantitative research in religious education. Hyde (1959, 1963, 1965) compiled and validated scales to measure religious behaviour, attitude toward religion and a range of

traditional religious concepts. Hyde built upon the work of Thurstone and Chave (1929), who developed the first scale to measure attitude toward the church. Thurstone and Chave demonstrated the value of attitude scales. They showed how responses to individual questions can be gathered together to produce an overall attitude score. The attitudes of individuals can then be compared by examining their positions on a scale, the composition of a group can be described, and comparisons can be made between whole groups (Thurstone and Chave 1929: 14).

Hyde's measure of attitude toward religion (1965) consisted of six sub-scales measuring attitude toward God, the Bible, religion, the church, and church attendance. Used to test secondary school pupils, Hyde (1990: 147) found that personal prayer and frequent church attendance related to the development of religious concepts, and that these in turn related to positive religious attitudes and behaviour. Hyde's findings did not lead to changes in approaches to religious education, but his methodology led the way for further use of attitude scaling techniques in research in religious education.

Edwin Cox's (1967) contribution to research in religious education was valuable in its development of the use of detailed questionnaires in large-scale surveys. Cox's research, carried out in 1963 and sponsored by the Christian Education Movement, set out to discover the views of English grammar school sixth formers on topics such as the existence of God, Jesus, life after death, religious education, and moral issues. The participating schools were selected randomly, and in all, 96 grammar schools contributed up to 25 pupils each, producing a total of 2,276 completed questionnaires. The research findings were presented in the form of percentages relating to individual opinions. Pupils recorded their views on the various topics on a five point scale expressing two degrees of positive response through uncertainty to two degrees of negative response. Additional open-ended questions allowed pupils to give reasons for their views, and to respond in greater depth.

The detail and consistency of the structure of the questionnaires allowed for a replication of the work seven years later (Wright and Cox 1971a, 1971b). It also allowed for John Greer, using an adapted version of the questionnaire, to conduct a similar study in Northern Ireland in 1968 and to replicate the study at ten-yearly

intervals, in 1978 and 1988 (Greer 1972, 1980, 1989, 1990). The advantages of replicating studies are that they can be used to check the validity of research findings across different populations, allowing for generalisations to be made with confidence, and can map trends or changes in the attitudes of similar populations over periods of time.

The use of questionnaires to gather data from large populations made possible a major initiative in research into secondary school religious education in the 1960s. The research was carried out by Colin Alves, on behalf of the British Council of Churches (Alves 1968). Alves took the list compiled by Loukes of 293 schools of different types (such as grammar, secondary modern, mixed-sex, etc.) that were deemed to be successful in religious education, and added to it a list of schools in the same categories that had not been positively identified as successful. The aim was to be able, by contrasting the two groups, to 'isolate the features of the successful schools which were not to be found in the unsuccessful schools' (Alves 1968: 29).

In 1965 20,000 questionnaires were sent out to 539 schools for completion by the highest ability stream of each school's fourth formers. These pupils would best represent the school's 'end results', allowing for the fact that many pupils left school at the end of the fourth year. Schools were to be judged as 'successful' in religious education by criteria relating to their pupils' knowledge, insights, attitudes and 'religious behaviour'. Pupils were to be questioned on their knowledge of Jesus' life and teaching, their insights into Jesus' teaching, in both its theological and its moral aspects, and their religious behaviour in terms of private prayer and public worship. They were also to be questioned on their attitudes toward Jesus, the Bible, the Church, and 'RE and Assembly', using a five point Likert scale, and whether they were willing to apply the word 'Christian' to themselves (Alves 1968: 32). From the final 520 schools that participated it was possible to identify 98 high-scoring and 102 low-scoring schools of similar type, and these were asked to participate in the next stage of the research.

The second stage of the research involved sending to the headteachers and religious education staff in the selected schools a questionnaire designed to indicate the factors that were most likely to contribute to successful religious education. This

questionnaire looked at provision for religious education in terms of time allocation and specialist teachers, content and method, 'assembly', out-of-class activities, and links between school and the outside world. In the third and final stage of the research questionnaires were completed by fifth and sixth formers, for best 'end results', in 60 of the high-scoring schools that participated in stage two of the survey. The aim of this questionnaire was to discover whether high knowledge and attitude scores achieved by the fourth formers had been achieved at the expense of real insight into religious and moral issues. The sixth formers were therefore given a substantially different questionnaire that aimed to assess their ability to think for themselves, taking as examples of this ability a lack of prejudice, and 'responsibility of judgement' (Alves 1968: 36).

Conclusions on a very wide range of issues could be drawn from such extensive surveys. For example, the attitudes of pupils from the different categories of schools and different geographical regions in England and Wales were compared, as were differences in attitude between boys and girls, and fourth-formers and sixth-formers. Within the schools, it was shown that factors such as the status of religious education and its teachers, syllabus content and teaching methods were significant for 'successful RE' (Alves 1968: 106). The findings resulted in recommendations for better training for greater numbers of specialist teachers, and a new and more relevant approach to religious education.

The surveys had a number of weaknesses, however. The method of selecting the schools to be included in the first survey allowed for bias in the sample, since Loukes' 293 reportedly 'successful' schools were matched with just 227 randomly selected schools that had not been identified as 'successful'. The criteria for considering these schools 'successful' or 'not successful' in their religious education were not stated. Further, the numbers of each type of school were too small to be statistically representative of all schools in England and Wales. Additionally, as Kay (1996: 43) points out, the attitude scale was not pre-tested and no justification was made of the choice of items. Kay observes too that a major weakness was the 'unrefined handling of data', due perhaps to the unavailability of computer facilities at that time, and suggests that a multivariate analysis of statistics would be needed to handle such data adequately.

Contemporary research has learned much from these pioneers in research in religious education. Whilst the value of qualitative research in the form of interviews has been recognised in that it provides for in-depth studies, quantitative research in the form of questionnaire surveys is seen to have a number of advantages. For example, it can ensure that the views of most pupils are heard (c.f. Loukes 1965), and can provide for constant measures across the whole range of participants in surveys, allowing for the mapping of age and generation trends (c.f. Cox 1967, Greer 1972, 1980, 1989, 1990). For a full picture of what is happening in schools, inter-related questionnaires to both pupils and teachers are needed (c.f. Alves 1968). For generalisations to be made with some degree of confidence it has been recognised that samples that are representative of whole populations are needed, together with a uniform and sophisticated approach to handling data (see above criticisms of Alves 1968). The difficulties encountered by the early researchers have been of value to contemporary researchers, since they have led to improvement in methodology. Perhaps the greatest value of the early researches lay in the fact that in most cases the research findings led to improvement in classroom practice.

Research in religious education: expanding the field

Since the foundational studies in the 1960s empirical research in religious education has followed many different lines of enquiry. This next section will review research studies most relevant to the present research. Since the present research takes account of the requirement for Christianity to be taught 'in the main', the review will focus primarily on research that relates to teaching Christianity and pupils' spiritual and moral development. The review will examine studies relating to provision for religious education and pupil attitudes toward the subject, pupil attitudes toward spiritual experience, both religious and non-religious, the influence of different types of schools and religious education syllabuses on attitude toward Christianity, and pupil attitudes toward moral issues.

Provision for religious education and attitude toward the subject

A number of studies, for example, Benfield (1975), Bailey (1979) and Francis (1987a) have examined provision for religious education. Francis (1987a) compared provision for religious education in Anglican, Catholic and county primary schools, and Hanlon (1989) examined provision for religious education in Roman Catholic

schools. Overall, it was found that provision was generally poor, both in terms of allocation of time and in material resources.

The major body of research has focused upon church schools rather than county schools and, at the time of this research, primary rather than secondary schools, although some studies have used information from schools at both primary and secondary levels. For example, O'Keeffe's study (1986) involved Anglican and county primary and secondary schools, Boyle (1984) and Boyle and Francis (1986) studied Catholic middle and secondary schools, and Gay et al. (1991a, 1991b) provided two related studies of Anglican schools, the first of primary and the second of secondary schools. However, the relative paucity of data from secondary schools suggested that this was an area where further research would be of particular value.

A number of studies, for example, Povall (1971), Greer and Brown (1973), Ormerod (1975), Keys and Ormerod (1976), Kay (1981a), Harvey (1984), Francis (1987b) have investigated pupils' attitudes toward religious education by comparing them with their attitudes toward other subjects. Although approaching the topic from different perspectives, these studies consistently found that religious education was one of the least favoured subjects in the school curriculum. Some studies have considered factors that may influence pupils' attitudes toward religious education. Kay (1973), Bedwell (1977), and Burgess (1975, 1980), for example, have explored the attitudes of teachers towards the subject. Other studies have examined the influences of gender, and age. Archer and Macrae (1991), for example, found that girls have a more positive attitude than boys toward the subject. McQuillan (1990) found that older secondary school pupils have a less positive attitude toward the subject than younger pupils.

Spiritual development: attitude toward spiritual experience

The government-sponsored documents of the 1990s interpreted spiritual development largely in terms of spiritual experience, and predominantly in terms of a spirituality that might have no connection with religion. A considerable body of research has been concerned over the years with spiritual experience. Numerous surveys in the USA and in Britain (see for example Hardy 1966, 1979, Robinson 1983, Hay 1982, 1990) have produced evidence that a high proportion of the general

population have had some kind of spiritual experience. In Britain substantial research into spiritual experience was initiated by Sir Alister Hardy with the setting up in 1969 of the Religious Experience Research Unit in Oxford. After advertising in newspapers, Hardy collected some 1,700 accounts (see Hay 1990: 31) of individuals' experiences of 'some Power, whether they call it God or not', which may 'appear to be beyond their individual selves' or 'within their being' (Hardy 1979: 20).

Initially these experiences were divided into two main categories, 'numinous' experiences, where the writer had an experience of the presence of God, and more 'mystical' experiences, where the writer had some sense of 'merging' with the rest of reality (see Hay 1990; 30,31). Classifications of some 3,000 accounts of 'religious' experiences (Hardy 1979: 68) were made according to the main elements of the experience, the antecedents or 'triggers' of the experience, and the effects of the experience on the lives of those concerned. Prominent among the 'triggers' were natural beauty, sacred places, participation in religious worship, prayer or meditation, music, visual art, creative work, happiness, solitude, and depression or despair. Consequences of the experience were usually a more positive attitude toward God and/or Christianity and toward others. Although classified under the heading 'Religious Experience' (Hardy 1979: 25), many of these accounts lacked any reference to a divine being, and might more correctly be described as 'spiritual' experiences.

Further surveys by Hay (1979), and Hay and Morisy (1978, 1985), for example, indicated that a half to two-thirds of the adult general population in Britain have had some kind of spiritual experience, many of them remembered from childhood (Hay 1990: 33, 57). Again, it was noted that such experiences usually led to a more positive attitude toward God/Christianity, and toward others. Such research findings are valuable in that they suggest that attitude toward spiritual experience might be used as an indicator of both spiritual and moral attitudes. The research findings also suggest that to make pupils aware of the possibility of spiritual experience might make a valuable contribution to their spiritual and moral development.

In spite of the volume of research into adult accounts of spiritual experience, comparatively little attention has been given to studying the spiritual experiences of young people. A small number of studies have investigated senior pupils' accounts of spiritual experiences. In an early study in the USA Elkind and Elkind (1962) found that a high percentage of a sample of 144 ninth grade high school students had recurrent experiences of feeling close to God. These occurred in situations that included being in church, being alone, praying, experiencing fear or anxiety, and being involved in moral action. In England, Paffard (1973) discovered that the sixth form pupils and undergraduates with whom he worked reported 'transcendental experiences'. Paffard described these in secular terms, arguing that only religious believers, conditioned by their religious culture, would describe these experiences in religious terms. Miles (1983) investigated the occurrence of transcendental experience among sixth form students, and questioned whether teaching about such experience would improve understanding, and whether that in turn would improve students' attitudes toward such experience. Robinson and Jackson (1987) conducted a questionnaire survey of over 6,500 sixth form pupils. This survey produced measures of 'numinous' experience and 'mystical' experience. A number of researchers have used their researches into spiritual experience to make recommendations for new approaches to religious education. For example, Hay (1985), Hammond et al. (1990), and Francis and Greer (1993) have stressed that for religious education to be effective, it must take into account the affective and experiential aspects of religion.

The studies described above involve accounts that describe pupils' experiences in predominantly non-religious terms. A substantial body of research has been concerned with what might correctly be called pupils' 'religious' experiences. Greer (1981) conducted a questionnaire survey of the religious beliefs and practices of 1,872 upper sixth form pupils attending Protestant schools in Northern Ireland in 1978. The questionnaire included one question relating to experience of God. Pupils were asked if they had ever 'had an experience of God, e.g. his presence or his help or anything else', and if so, if they could describe the experience. Thirty-eight per cent of the boys and fifty-one per cent of the girls replied in the affirmative, and over five hundred gave a brief account of their experience. Greer classified these under eight main headings, namely, guidance and help, examinations, depression and

sickness, death, answered prayer, God's presence, conversion experiences, and good experiences. A further category was classified 'miscellaneous', and included very small numbers of pupils who referred to awareness of the presence of God in nature, in church contexts, through people, through baptism in the Holy Spirit, and through reading the Bible. Most commonly, pupils felt that they experienced God giving guidance and help (59% of the boys, 65% of the girls).

In 1981 Greer (1982) conducted a similar study of 940 Roman Catholic and 1,193 Protestant pupils aged 12-17 attending 19 secondary and grammar schools in Northern Ireland. He included the same question as in the earlier questionnaire and this time 33% of the boys and 51% of the girls replied in the affirmative. The answers were analysed by age, sex and religious affiliation. There were no significant age differences in the proportions of pupils who reported religious experience, but higher percentages of girls than of boys and of Catholics than of Protestants reported spiritual experience. Descriptions of the experience were provided by 625 pupils, and these were classified under the same headings as in the earlier study. These data indicated that God was most frequently experienced in answered prayer and, as in the earlier study, in giving help and guidance. Greer concluded, as a result of these two studies, that the role of religious education should be to help pupils to become aware of the mystery of God, to protect their religious experiences, and to enable them to articulate and interpret them.

Greer's researches were valuable in that the research question was more precisely defined than in the researches of Hardy and Hay, for example. Greer's question refers specifically to God, rather than to a power which may or may not be called God. The research findings are thus more sharply focused; they relate to religious experience rather than the vaguely defined 'spiritual' experience. Greer's researches were also valuable in that they added to the body of research that suggested ways in which religious education might be improved to meet pupils' needs.

Spiritual development: attitude toward Christianity
In Britain until the late 1960s it was assumed that 'spiritual development' involved development in Christian understanding, belief and practice. Colin Alves (1968), for example, used knowledge of the Bible, insights into Jesus' teaching, attitudes toward

various aspects of Christianity and religious education, and religious practice, as the criteria for assessing the spirituality of older secondary school pupils. A substantial body of school-based research in British religious education and pupils' spiritual development has continued in this tradition. In the early 1970s Leslie Francis initiated a programme of research that aimed to provide, in a consistent manner, some understanding of changes in the spiritual attitudes of children and adolescents, the causes of such changes, and the impact of a religious outlook on young people's lives. Francis chose to assess spiritual development in terms of attitude toward Christianity. He developed a scale of attitude toward Christianity (Francis 1976) and invited other researchers to collaborate with him in his research (Francis 1978b).

The Francis scale of attitude toward Christianity has been used in well over a hundred studies, the majority involving pupils in British schools and, taken together, they provide a detailed picture of the development of attitude toward Christianity during the years of childhood and adolescence. Since the studies have used the same measuring instrument it has been possible to make comparisons between the influences of different types of schools, for example, and different approaches to religious education on the spiritual development, assessed in terms of attitude toward Christianity, of different samples of pupils. Studies relating most closely to the present research are reviewed below.

In an early study carried out in East Anglia in 1974 Francis (1979b) compared the influence of Roman Catholic, Church of England voluntary aided and county primary schools on pupils' attitudes toward Christianity. The data showed that pupils in Roman Catholic voluntary aided schools showed more positive attitudes toward Christianity than pupils in county schools, whilst pupils in Church of England schools showed less positive attitudes toward Christianity than pupils in county schools. Replications of the study in 1978 (Francis et al. 1978) and in 1982 (Francis 1986b) produced the same findings. Use of the same measuring instrument in the replications of the original study provided for consistency in the research studies, and indicated that the original findings exemplified a general trend. However, nationally applicable generalisations could not be made from these studies, since each school type was represented by a small number of schools in one area in England.

A further study involved almost five thousand year six pupils (Francis 1987a) throughout the county of Gloucestershire. A high proportion of the county schools, Roman Catholic voluntary aided schools, Church of England voluntary aided schools and Church of England voluntary controlled schools participated. The data obtained in this study re-affirmed the positive influence of Roman Catholic primary schools on pupils' attitudes toward Christianity but indicated that Church of England voluntary aided schools made no difference either way to pupils' attitudes toward Christianity. As earlier, these findings could not be considered representative of all such schools in Britain, and the differences in the findings relating to Church of England voluntary aided schools showed that further research was needed.

One study involving Church of England, Roman Catholic and county secondary schools (Francis and Carter 1980) has indicated that Church of England secondary schools exert neither a positive nor a negative influence on pupils' attitudes toward Christianity. In comparison, a number of studies carried out in England (Francis 1987c, 1989), Scotland (Gibson and Francis 1989, Gibson 1989) and Northern Ireland (Francis and Greer 1990a, Greer and Francis 1991) have shown consistently that pupils in Roman Catholic secondary schools have a more positive attitude toward Christianity than their counterparts in non-denominational schools. The Francis scale of attitude to Christianity has been employed in all of these studies. The use of the same measuring instrument and the fact that these studies have been carried out extensively in different parts of Britain suggests that nationally relevant generalisations can begin to be made with some degree of confidence.

A number of studies have sought to find the reasons why the different types of schools produced in their pupils different attitudes toward Christianity. A study carried out in 1981 of all pupils from year seven through to year eleven in five Catholic comprehensive schools in the Midlands (Francis 1986c) showed that non-Catholic pupils, even from churchgoing backgrounds, had less positive attitudes toward Christianity than Catholic pupils. A similar investigation involving year eleven pupils attending fifteen of the sixteen Catholic state-maintained secondary schools in Wales in 1983/4 (Egan and Francis 1986, Egan 1988) showed that pupils in Catholic schools who were practising Catholics had more positive attitudes toward Christianity than non-practising Catholics and non-Catholics. Egan repeated this

study in Australia (Francis and Egan 1987) and in the USA (Francis and Egan 1990). In both cases there were similar findings. This suggested that home and personal religious practice had a greater influence than school on pupils' religious attitudes. Replications of the research meant that generalisations could be made with a high degree of confidence.

A small number of studies have examined the impact of different approaches to teaching religious education on pupils' attitudes toward Christianity. The first study (Francis 1979b) showed that there was no difference in attitude between pupils in non-denominational primary schools that offered no religious education, those that followed a Bible-based syllabus, and those that followed a thematic syllabus.

In a study of religious education in Roman Catholic, Church of England, and state-maintained secondary schools in England, and Protestant and Roman Catholic schools in Ulster and Eire, William Kay (1981b) examined the effects of the content of the religious education lessons on pupils' attitudes toward Christianity. Kay found first that all categories of schools in England and Ulster gave most time to teaching the Bible, whilst schools in Eire gave most RE curriculum time to teaching about relationships and morals. He then found that teaching about the Bible in Ulster Roman Catholic schools and in Church of England schools promoted positive attitudes toward Christianity, whilst teaching world religions had a detrimental effect on attitudes toward Christianity in Ulster Protestant schools and English state-maintained schools. Kay also examined the way in which content was taught, and concluded that if teachers forbade discussion, regardless of the lesson content, pupils had less positive attitudes toward Christianity. Kay's research showed that teaching method was as important, if not more so, than curriculum content.

These studies show that the use of measuring instruments that have proved to be reliable and valid in other studies provides for consistency in research studies. A particular research question can be addressed in different contexts, and research findings can be compared and contrasted to build up a comprehensive account of the area being studied. By using the Francis scale of attitude toward Christianity in numerous different contexts, a picture has emerged of the factors that are likely to

influence pupils' spiritual attitudes. The present research benefits from these findings.

Moral development: attitude toward moral issues

Whilst a very substantial body of research has investigated various aspects of the relationship between religious education and pupils' spiritual development, less research attention has been given to the relationship between religious education and pupils' moral development.

Nevertheless, by the end of the 1960s a small number of large-scale research projects concerned with moral education had been set in motion. The Schools Council Moral Education Curriculum Project, reported by McPhail, Ungoed-Thomas and Chapman (1972) involved a four-year study of secondary school pupils' needs. The project involved the use of questionnaires and interviews. The research findings revealed that most adolescents expected their schools to help them to learn to live well, by helping them to learn to care for others. This would involve schools in helping pupils to understand what makes an action good or bad, and helping them to find solutions to their interpersonal problems (McPhail et al. 1972: 5). The research findings resulted in the production of a series of booklets, the *Lifeline* series, containing material for use in moral education in secondary schools. The research thus made a valuable contribution to teaching practice.

Philip May (1971), noting an increasing interest in moral education which he attributed to an upsurge of violence in society, set out to survey teachers' and adolescents' attitudes toward both moral and religious education. His first survey involved a random selection of all types of maintained schools located in two urban and rural areas in the North of England and two in the South. The main findings from some 2,500 questionnaires from 311 schools revealed that over 60% of teachers of all subjects wanted special periods to be set aside for moral education (May 1971: 53). The questions of justification for moral education, and suggestions for content, were dealt with by 'open' written replies to the questionnaire and follow-up interviews. The most frequently stated reasons for favouring moral education lessons were to contribute to developing pupils' personalities and moral attitudes. Regarding content, the suggestions were wide-ranging. Teaching about general

ethical principles and teaching about Christian ethics were the most popular suggestions. Of the specific topics under the general heading of 'relations between the individual and society', the two most frequently mentioned topics related to drug addiction and questions of race (May 1971: 60-79).

Edwin Cox (1967) included a set of questions on eleven moral issues in a questionnaire on aspects of sixth form pupils' religiosity. Modified versions of the questionnaire were used by Wright and Cox (1967, 1971) and Summerwill (1978). Cox's original set of questions was used by Greer (1972a, 1980, 1989) to trace changes in moral values over two decades. The list was extended by Greer (1984) to seventeen topics, and further extended by Long (1989). All these studies reported adolescent responses to individual moral issues.

In order to develop and establish a homogenous and unidimensional scale of traditional Christian moral values for use in future research studies, Francis and Greer (1992) included Greer's seventeen items relating to moral issues in a questionnaire completed by pupils in Catholic and Protestant secondary schools in Northern Ireland. Of the seventeen items, ten formed one major unidimensional scale of moral values in the sample of 1,079 13-16 year old pupils. The five-point Likert type scale involved responses to gambling, drinking alcohol, drunkenness, stealing, drug taking, sexual intercourse before marriage, abortion, artificial birth control, suicide and divorce. These ten items were included in a questionnaire designed to chart the interaction between moral values and other aspects of adolescent religiosity among fourth, fifth and sixth-form students in Catholic schools in Northern Ireland (Francis and Greer 1990b). The questionnaire also included the Francis scale of attitude toward Christianity (1978b, 1989), and questions on church attendance, belief in the existence of God, and the frequency of personal prayer. The data showed that a large proportion of Catholic students rejected a number of the moral absolutes maintained by traditional Catholic teaching. Further, it was shown that moral judgements were more closely aligned to students' attitude toward Christianity than to their participation in public or private religious practices.

These two studies (Francis and Greer 1990b, 1992) were valuable for future research in that they established a psychometric instrument for measuring moral values. It

was noted, however, that further research was needed to establish whether the structure and patterning of Christian moral values found in adolescents in Northern Ireland were reproduced in other parts of Britain, where church influence on moral attitudes might be less strong.

The 10 item Likert scale of Christian moral values was used in conjunction with a question about religious experience (Greer 1981, 1982), and with the Francis (1978b, 1989) scale of attitude toward Christianity in a questionnaire assessing the contribution of religious experience to the development of positive attitudes toward Christianity (Francis and Greer 1993). Analysis of the data indicated that religious experience contributed to a positive attitude toward Christianity, but it neither increased nor decreased an individual's likelihood of supporting traditional Christian moral values.

A number of studies have focused on the relationship between religion and particular aspects of morality. For example, Francis et al. (1983, 1988) and Pearson and Francis (1989) examined the fact that religious adolescents tended to score highly on lie scales. They concluded that this finding might indicate the truthful reporting of a commitment to standards of behaviour consistent with these adolescents' religious faith. Researching a different area of morality, Francis (1984) developed a five-point Likert type scale to test the relationship between adolescent religiosity and attitude toward drug use. The scale included questions on belief in God and attitude toward the use of alcohol, butane gas, glue, marijuana, heroin and tobacco. These questions were used in a survey of 4,753 year nine and year ten pupils in twenty-nine secondary schools representing different parts of England (Francis and Mullen 1993). The questionnaire used in this survey also included questions on frequency of church attendance and denominational identity. The resulting data demonstrated that adolescents' attitudes toward drug use varied considerably from one substance to another, and that religiosity was a significant predictor of attitude toward the use of each of the substances included in the survey.

The same questions relating to drug use were included in a major survey of teenage religion and values (Francis and Kay 1995). Questionnaires were completed by just over thirteen thousand year nine and year ten pupils in state-maintained secondary

schools in England and Wales. Comparisons were made between pupils who attended church weekly, sometimes or never, and non-churchgoing pupils who believed in God, were agnostic, or were atheists. In the case of each substance the highest percentage of churchgoing pupils who believed it wrong to use the substance were those who attended church weekly, followed by those who attended sometimes, then those who never attended. In the case of each substance the highest percentage of non-churchgoing pupils who believed it wrong to use the substance were theists, followed by agnostics, then atheists. The great majority of teenagers thought it wrong, in descending order of seriousness, to sniff glue, use heroin or sniff butane gas. A much smaller majority thought it wrong to use marijuana or smoke cigarettes, and only a minority (22%) considered it wrong to become drunk.

Included in the same survey was a set of questions designed to examine pupils' moral codes. Pupils were first asked to respond, by expressing agreement, disagreement or uncertainty, to the statement 'The police do a good job'. Other statements began with 'There is nothing wrong in ...' and ranged over shop-lifting, travelling without a ticket, cycling after dark without lights, playing truant, buying cigarettes or alcohol under the legal age, and writing graffiti. The data demonstrated that churchgoing pupils were more inclined to agree with keeping the law than were non-churchgoing pupils, and that theists were more likely to agree with keeping the law than were agnostics or atheists.

A further set of questions in the Francis and Kay (1995) survey related to sexual morality. Six topics were chosen to provide examples of teenagers' views on human sexuality. They were as follows: sexual intercourse outside marriage, divorce, contraception, abortion, sexual intercourse under the legal age, and homosexuality. In sharp contrast with the other areas relating to morality, the majority of the teenagers expressed tolerance toward most forms of sexual behaviour. Only 5% of the sample felt that contraception is wrong, 13% that sex outside marriage is wrong, and less than a quarter that divorce, or sex under the legal age of consent is wrong. Teenage opinion was more evenly divided on the issues of abortion and homosexuality. As with the other areas relating to morality, the pupils who attended church weekly were less likely to have liberal views toward most types of sexual behaviour than the pupils who never attended, and theists were less likely to have

liberal views than agnostics or atheists. Just one topic did not follow these trends. In the case of homosexuality, a higher percentage of non-churchgoers (43%) than either occasional (35%) or weekly (37%) churchgoers believed that homosexuality is wrong, together with an equal percentage (44%) of non-churchgoing theists and atheists.

The value of the Francis and Kay 1995 survey is that the findings could be considered representative of the views of all teenagers in England and Wales. The pupils were drawn from 65 schools in different parts of England and Wales, of which 57 were county schools, 2 were Church of England aided schools and 6 were aided Roman Catholic. This balance of school types matched quite closely the national balance between school types (Francis and Kay 1995: 8, 9). With a sample of this size and composition, generalisations relating to the population as a whole can be made with some degree of confidence. On the basis of these generalisations, recommendations can be made that will help all who are professionally involved with promoting the development of personal, social and moral values among young people and preparing them for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life. A further advantage was that of the whole sample of approximately 13,000 pupils, 49% were male and 51% female, so the sexes were evenly balanced. Valid comparisons could therefore be made between the two groups. Male attitudes could be compared with female attitudes. Comparisons could also be made between year nine and year ten pupils. In this way age trends could be detected. A final advantage was that the survey covered a very wide range of issues. This allowed for a very clear and detailed profile of the sample. The findings could be used to answer a very wide range of questions relating to teenagers' spiritual and moral attitudes.

The foregoing review of research in religious education has shown that research in this area, as in any other area in education, has generally been driven by an awareness of weaknesses in teaching and outcomes. This has indicated a need for additional knowledge about the subject, in theoretical terms, and new approaches to the practice of the subject. Where research has been initiated in response to a call to identify failings, there has been a need to discover what is actually happening in schools. The research that has provided the most comprehensive picture of what is happening in a school or classroom has involved both pupils and teachers. In most

studies, whether of pupils, teachers, or both, the findings have led to recommendations for improvement in teaching practice and the development of new approaches to religious education. The present research aims to contribute to the body of knowledge established by earlier research, with a view to suggesting ways in which religious education might make a greater impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Research methodology

The foregoing review of research in religious education has focused mainly on the content, findings and practical outcomes of research studies relating to religious education and pupils' spiritual and moral development. This next section will examine in more detail the research methods of earlier researches in these areas, with a view to identifying the methods best suited to the present research topic.

Sampling

Where there has been a call to identify failures in areas of teaching and learning and to develop new teaching approaches, the research methods needed have been those that make it possible for generalisations to be made. Data have therefore been gathered from samples large enough to be representative of much bigger populations, and the statistical procedures have been those that enable both the findings to be generalised and comparisons to be made between large groups of pupils. Most of the research studies reviewed above have involved large samples, the approach being quantitative rather than qualitative.

Care needs to be taken to avoid bias in the sample. Colin Alves, for example, used a random sampling procedure to select schools to be added to Loukes' original list of schools. In Alves' initial survey the final list consisted of 520 secondary schools, representing almost 10% of the total number of county secondary schools in England and Wales. The sample was not, however, fully representative of the national population since, as Alves points out, 50% of the sample schools (those listed by Loukes) had been recommended as being 'successful' in religious education, and there was therefore a bias in the sample. Nevertheless, Alves was able to achieve his aim of identifying from among these schools two groups, one of schools that scored high marks in tests of attainment and attitude, the other of schools that scored low

marks. Comparisons could then be made between the groups, and the methods of data analysis made it possible for the findings to be generalised, resulting in recommendations for improvement in teaching approaches.

Other research studies have used smaller samples, and the resulting data have been used to make generalisations relevant to smaller and more specific populations. Another approach, as in the researches of Francis and colleagues for example, is to use the same measuring instruments in numerous different surveys. The findings from individual studies can then be gathered together to make nationally relevant generalisations.

Questionnaires

Questionnaire surveys have the advantage that they can gather a very large amount of information from very large samples on one single occasion that takes up a relatively short amount of time. There are two main types of questionnaires. The first uses open form questions, to which the respondents make their own answers. This is time-consuming for the respondent, and limits the response of those lacking writing skills. It is also produces problems for the researcher in quantifying and analysing the results. The second type uses closed form questions, which are carefully thought out beforehand and to which a limited number and range of responses are possible. Although this type of questionnaire may fail to give respondents the opportunity to express the full range of their views, it has a number of advantages. This type of questionnaire provides for objectivity, in the sense that the administration instructions and scoring procedures are standard, whatever the composition of the sample or the biases of the administrator. It also allows not only for the recording of opinions on individual topics but also for the measurement of attitudes, which are generally stable, deep-seated, enduring views on wider issues. This type of questionnaire can allow for the construction of attitude scales, and also provide information about the variables other than those being studied that might influence attitudes. A final advantage of a closed form questionnaire is that each question can be pre-coded to allow for ease of computer analysis. Most of the research studies reviewed above involved this type of questionnaire.

Definitions of attitude

Many of the research studies reviewed above include measures of attitude. The measurement of attitude is particularly appropriate to research in religious education. Kay and Francis (1996: 184) argue that attitudes are central to the study of religious development because, in common with religion, they are expressed in terms of variables that have a personal, psychological dimension and as variables that have a social, collective dimension. Also in common with religion, attitudes relate to more than one discipline and fit well with interdisciplinary studies.

The definitions of 'attitude' are numerous. Kay (1970: 236, 237) lists the varying definitions of seven different writers, Hyde (1990: 391, 392) lists five others. Burns (1979: 52), for example, lists four components of the concept of attitude as follows: a belief, or knowledge, or cognitive component, an affective or emotional component, an evaluation, and a predisposition to respond. Borg and Gall (1989: 311) state that an attitude can be thought of as having three components: an affective component, a cognitive component, and a behavioural or conative component. Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962: 177) define attitude as 'an enduring system of positive and negative evaluations, emotional feelings and pro and con action tendencies with respect to a social object'. Kay (1970: 237) notes the variety of definitions of attitude and concludes that there is general agreement that an attitude is 'an enduring orientation of the mind, which predisposes one to act in a particular way, leads to overt action when related to a specific referent, and is invariably associated with a specific social object'.

Fishbein (1963) found the link between the components of the multidimensional view of attitudes unsatisfactory and viewed attitudes as unidimensional constructs made up solely of affective components. This was the view that was adopted by Leslie Francis and colleagues in their research studies relating to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Francis recognised too that the unidimensional view had greater potential for providing valid and reliable attitude scales (Francis and Kay 1984).

Attitude scales

Much of the foregoing research has made use of attitude scales. Oppenheim (1996: 187) states that the chief function of attitude scales is to divide people into a number

of broad groups with respect to a particular attitude, and to allow us to study the ways in which such an attitude relates to other variables in a survey.

Attitude scales can therefore be used when there is a need to examine the differences between or the similarities within groups that have been subjected to different teaching approaches, for example. There are a number of different methods of attitude scaling, the earliest being that developed by Thurstone and Chave (1929). They describe attitude scaling as 'a method whereby the distribution of attitude of a group on a specific issue may be represented in the form of a frequency distribution' (Thurstone and Chave 1929: xi). According to this method the ordinates of the frequency distribution represent a whole range of attitudes from those strongly in favour of an issue to those strongly against it, with a neutral zone representing indifferent attitudes toward the issue. Statements of opinion are allocated to different equal-interval points along a linear continuum. An individual's attitude is indicated by the mean of the range of opinions s/he endorses, and an ordinate of the frequency distribution for a group will represent the number of individuals or percentage of a whole group that endorses a particular opinion (Thurstone and Chave 1929: 14). Thus the attitudes of groups can be compared.

At the beginning of the research programme he set up to investigate attitudes toward Christianity, Leslie Francis tested a number of different types of attitude scales (Kay and Francis 1996: 187-194). Francis found that the type of scale that measured attitude toward Christianity and functioned most reliably over a wide age-range was a Likert-type scale, developed from the Thurstone and Chave method of collecting together large numbers of attitude statements and rejecting ambiguous items. The Likert method asks respondents to place themselves on an attitude continuum by choosing one of the five responses to each opinion statement, 'agree strongly', 'agree', 'not certain', 'disagree', or 'disagree strongly'. These responses are scored 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 for favourable responses, and the scores are reversed for unfavourable responses. The scores are then added together, and the items with the highest correlation coefficients with the total scores are retained to form a scale. A perfect positive correlation is expressed by +1, a perfect negative correlation is expressed by −1, and no correlation by 0. A negative correlation occurs when smaller scores on one variable relate to larger scores on another variable. Since in

attitude scales negative statements of attitude are reverse scored, attitude scales indicate only positive correlations between the items in the scale.

In order to test whether the scale measures consistently over a short period of time, the scores on alternate items can be added together and the totals correlated. This is known as split-half reliability. In the scales used in much of the research reviewed above, the internal reliability of the test is calculated according to Cronbach's (1951) 'alpha', that is, the average correlation between all possible combinations of half the items with the other half. Using this method the reliability of a test can be calculated without administering it more than once (Kay and Francis 1996: 173). A scale is also likely to be more accurate if it has a large number of items, since if it has only three items, for example, a change of response to one item changes the score by a large proportion. If the scores on a large number of items correlate closely it is likely that the scale has internal reliability and is unidimensional, that is, all items are measuring the same thing.

Analysing the data

Methods of analysing the data provided by the surveys have become increasingly more sophisticated over the years. Colin Alves, to refer again to early research in religious education, used a number of statistical methods to analyse his data. In his initial survey he calculated a mean-average score and a median score for pupils' attainment and attitudes in each school. Using these central values as representative of the whole group, and by comparing these averages, expressed as percentages, Alves was able to identify the schools with the highest scores and those with the lowest scores, thus identifying two contrast groups. In further studies Alves compared the ranges of the mean scores, the range being the span between the highest mean score and lowest mean score, in order to compare pupil attitudes toward religious education, and religious practice in different types of schools. He also compared, by isolating in turn each of the four following factors, the influence of regional variations, school size, school status, and the sex distribution of pupils, on pupils' attitudes toward religious education and religious practice. In each case he compared mean scores, and in his study of regional differences, he calculated the standard deviation for each region and also tested for statistical significance. These basic and well-established statistical procedures have continued to be used in

quantitative research in religious education, with more recent studies benefiting from the use of more complex procedures.

In quantitative research the samples are generally are very large and provide very large masses of data, which need to be summarised in ways that enable comparisons to be made between different sub-groups in the sample. Mean scores and median scores are measures of central tendency. They are single numerical values that describe the average of an entire set of scores. The mean is calculated by adding together all the individual scores in a collection of data and dividing the total by the number of scores. If the distribution of the scores from a sample is skewed, that is, when there are more extreme scores at one end of the distribution than at the other, the mean will be in the direction of the greater number of extreme scores. In such cases the median more accurately represents the average score. The median is found by ranking the scores in order of size and identifying the middle score. However, the mean is the more frequently used measure of central tendency since it can be used in conjunction with other calculations, and can then give a more precise picture of a sample.

A more accurate description of a sample can be gained by calculating both the mean and the standard deviation. The standard deviation is a measure of variability or dispersion, that is, the extent to which scores are spread out from a central value. Most individuals' average scores will deviate from the mean score of the whole sample, some in a positive direction, some in a negative direction. The standard deviation of a distribution indicates the average amount by which all the scores in a distribution deviate from the mean. The greater the dispersion, the bigger the deviations and the bigger the average, or standard, deviation. Since the negative deviations cancel out the positive deviations so that they will always add up to zero, each deviation is squared, thus turning negative numbers into positive numbers. The mean of the squared deviations is called the variance. The square root of the variance then gives the standard deviation, that is the average amount by which all the mean scores deviate from the overall mean. Taken together, the mean indicates the central tendency in a batch of data and the standard deviation indicates the dispersion of the data, that is, whether scores are clustered closely around the mean or are more widely distributed across the sample. Knowledge of the mean score and

the dispersion of a sample makes it possible to define and compare the characteristics of different samples and of sub-groups within a sample.

Differences between groups, for example, between the attitudes of groups of pupils taught by one method and groups of pupils taught by another method, are discovered by the use of a mathematical procedure called statistical inference. A null hypothesis is first assumed, suggesting that there is no difference between these groups' attitudes. A test of statistical significance is then done to determine whether the null hypothesis can be rejected because there is a true difference between the groups. In other words, the difference did not happen by chance. The differences between the mean attitude scores of the groups are then used to calculate whether differences have happened by chance.

The level of statistical significance obtained in the study is called the probability value (represented as 'P'). By convention, in sociological research the level of significance is usually set at 0.05 (5%). This means that a difference in attitude-means can be accepted as significant if it could have occurred by chance in only five pairs of samples in every hundred. The null hypothesis can be rejected with greater confidence if the difference between the sample means is significant at the 1% (0.01) level, and even more so at the 0.1% (0.001) level. Since samples vary, for example in the dispersion of responses around the mean, it is possible to accept a difference as significant when it is not, or vice versa. To avoid claiming a difference when there is none, researchers may set the level of significance at 0.01, or even 0.001.

Most of the more recent research studies reviewed above have used tests of statistical significance to find out whether there are real differences between groups of pupils who have been subjected to different teaching approaches. Since the present research draws from and seeks to build upon previous research studies in the field of religious education and spiritual and moral development, it will also employ these methods of data analysis.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed a wide range of research studies relating to religious education and pupils' spiritual and moral development. It has shown that the main

factor that leads to new research initiatives is generally a recognition of weaknesses in teaching approaches and pupil achievement, and that the value of research has been in that, in most cases, the research findings have led to new initiatives to improve teaching approaches. The review has also indicated the value of empirical research and a quantitative approach, the value of questionnaire surveys and the use of attitude scales, and the need for samples that are representative of larger populations. A focus on the content and findings of previous research studies has suggested the kind of study that is needed in order to be able to assess the impact of different approaches to religious education on pupils'spiritual and moral development. Finally, the methods of data analysis most commonly used in most of the more recent research studies have been identified and evaluated.

This concludes the first part of this dissertation, which is concerned with the conceptual and theoretical aspects of the research. Part two will describe the setting up of the two questionnaire surveys used in the present research study to assess the impact of different approaches to religious education on pupils' spiritual and moral development, the first involving religious education teachers and the second involving secondary school pupils.

PART TWO

Spiritual and Moral Attitudes:

Setting up the Surveys

Chapter Five

The teacher survey:
identifying school approaches to religious education

Overview

The present research sets out to discover the relationship between different approaches to religious education and pupils' spiritual and moral development, in the light of British government legislation and recommendations for religious education in the 1990s. Part one of this dissertation identified eight common approaches to teaching religious education in the mid-1990s, traditional and contemporary understandings of spiritual and moral development and, by reviewing earlier research studies in these fields, methods of assessing relationships between religious education and pupils' spiritual and moral development. Part two of this dissertation will describe the setting up of two separate but inter-related studies designed to provide a way of assessing pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes in the light of different approaches to religious education. The first study aimed to categorise schools according to their approach to religious education. The second study aimed to assess pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes, relating these to the kind of religious education they had received during their time in secondary school. The research approach is quantitative, making use of questionnaire surveys, but a small amount of qualitative research is included in the form of teachers' written and verbal comments, offered to provide clarification of their views in some instances. This chapter will describe the first study.

Conducting the survey

Location

The research was carried out across one county in England, namely Cornwall. The aim was to acquire data that would allow for generalisations to be made about secondary school religious education throughout one local education authority area. The data provided by Cornish schools would allow for these generalisations to be made with some degree of confidence. First, in the mid-1990s there were no state-maintained Church secondary schools in Cornwall, and all 31 non-denominational secondary schools were under the direct control of the local education authority. Secondly, pupils tended to come from similar backgrounds. Cornwall in the mid-1990s had a high degree of homogeneity in terms of its socio-economic, demographic and religious composition. There were no large cities or highly industrialised areas. Cornwall relied heavily on agriculture and tourism for

economic viability, with some success in these areas, yet the collapse of the fishing and tin mining industries and the decline in the clay mining industry had led to widespread unemployment and relative poverty.

With regard to religion, Cornwall has a strong Christian heritage and is almost exclusively Christian. The *Religious Education Directory: Cornwall* (Cornwall County Council Education Committee, undated), used by the schools taking part in the research surveys as a resource, shows that the largest numbers of churches in each of Cornwall's six districts are Methodist churches, with the Church of England coming a close second. There are several pages of listings for each of these churches in each district, together with small numbers of churches representing the other leading denominations of the Christian church. In contrast, just one Buddhist group is named in just one district, and no other faith groups are named in the district listings. Included in a whole-county list as 'churches which are not widely represented' are Buddhism, Islam and Judaism. Sikhism and Hinduism are not listed at all.

This high degree of demographic and religious homogeneity reduces the number of variables that need to be taken into account when assessing influences on pupils' spiritual and moral development, and suggests that generalisations relating to school influence may be made with a high degree of confidence.

A further factor that made Cornwall a good choice of location for the research was that religious education had come to the forefront of Cornish schools' attention during the period when the research took place. The teacher survey took place early in 1995, just at the time of the completion of a new Cornwall agreed syllabus for religious education. The 1989 Cornwall agreed syllabus, *Completing the Curriculum in Cornish Schools* (Cornwall County Council Education Committee), had been replaced by *Religious Education in Cornwall: Draft 1993 Amendment to 1989 Agreed Syllabus*, and this document was adopted in its entirety as the agreed syllabus in September 1993. At the time of the teacher survey (February to June 1995) this syllabus, *Religious Education in Cornwall: Agreed Syllabus 1993*, was still in use in the schools.

Knowledge of the recent government directives for religious education was widespread. A number of secondary school teachers under the direction of John Keast, then Adviser for Religious Education in Cornwall and subsequently the Principal Subject Officer for Religious Education in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, had been involved in drawing up a new syllabus for the years 1995 to 2000. The preface to the new syllabus, *Religious Education in Cornwall: Agreed Syllabus 1995 to 2000,* stated that it had taken account of 'the best current practice in the County', and referred to 'the work which schools have done in implementing the 1993 syllabus'. It also referred to the national *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994), John Keast having been involved in the process of developing the national model syllabuses. Additionally, the new syllabus referred to the 1988 Education Reform Act, *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: final report by Sir Ron Dearing* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1993), and *Circular 1/94* (Department for Education 1994). A number of meetings had been arranged to inform teachers and involve them in the production of the new 1995 to 2000 Cornwall syllabus, and it became clear in the course of the surveys that most heads of religious education were thoroughly conversant with the government-sponsored documents and their contents. At the same time, teachers were also involved in the production of the Cornwall Certificate of Religion and Ethics, a means of accrediting work completed by Key Stage 4 pupils not taking GCSE courses.

The research thus took place at a time when interest in religious education was keen and it was seen to be an important subject in the school curriculum. Most religious education teachers in Cornwall were very aware of government recommendations for religious education and contemporary approaches to the subject. It was therefore likely that there would be a good response to requests for schools' participation in a religious education survey.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire for teachers was designed with the aim of categorising schools in terms of the eight different approaches to religious education identified in the first chapter of this dissertation. These approaches are described as 'minimalist', 'adequate', 'Christianity in the main', 'world religions', 'thematic', 'systematic',

'phenomenological', and 'experiential'. In order to be able to categorise schools according to these definitions, the teacher questionnaire aimed first to collect factual information regarding provision for religious education, teaching content and method, and secondly, to examine teachers' attitudes towards religious education. From this information each school could be categorised according to its overall approach to teaching religious education.

The front cover page of the teacher questionnaire begins by stating an overall purpose of the teacher survey, namely that of discovering the needs of teachers involved in religious education in Cornwall. It explains the reasons for the pre-coded questions, asks for honest answers to the questions, and promises anonymity.

In order to take as little of the teachers' time as possible the questionnaire contains mainly pre-coded questions offering a definite range of possible answers. The remaining few questions are open-ended, most asking for numbers, and one asking for details of the text-books currently used in religious education lessons.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part aims to give an overview of the extent of provision for religious education throughout years seven to eleven. The second part aims to discover the attitudes of the heads of religious education toward their subject.

Part one of the questionnaire consists of thirty questions. It sets out to discover the extent of provision for religious education. The questionnaire asks for the number of pupils in year ten, the total number of teaching staff, the number of staff teaching religious education, and the number of the latter with professional qualifications in the subject. It asks how many hours per year of religious education are received by pupils in each year-group, and by examination and non-examination groups in years ten and eleven. It asks how religious education is organised for non-examination pupils in years ten and eleven, for example, discretely or as part of a general course, and whether Christianity is taught at each key stage, and at least one other religion at each key stage.

Teachers are asked to state whether religions are taught thematically or systematically, and whether their teaching approach is phenomenological, confessional, or experiential. They are asked how often pupils have access to resources such as slides, films or videos, audio-tapes, television or radio programmes, computer programmes, text books or reference books, Bibles, or work-sheets produced by the teacher. They are asked how often pupils have the opportunity to visit a place of worship or hear someone from a faith community describe what their faith means to them. They are asked which versions of the Bible are available in class sets, and which textbooks are used. The last questions in this section ask whether the head of religious education belongs to a church or other religious group, and if so, to indicate the name of the denomination/religion and the frequency of attendance at the place of worship.

Part two of the questionnaire consists of 100 questions on teacher attitudes toward various aspects of religious education. Likert-type scales are used to measure teachers' attitudes. Agreement or disagreement with each statement is rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 'agree strongly', through 'agree', 'not certain' and 'disagree' to 'disagree strongly'.

This second part of the questionnaire is divided into six sections. The first section begins by asking questions relating to Christianity and the five other principal religions represented in Great Britain that were recommended for study by the *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) - namely, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Taking account of the attainment targets recommended by the model syllabuses, 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion, it asks whether religious education should help pupils to understand what each of the six religions are, and what it would mean to take them seriously. It asks whether pupils should be helped to understand the sacred writings of each religion, and to apply their teachings to their own lives. It asks whether pupils should be helped to understand the central beliefs and practices of Christianity, and whether pupils should be helped to understand the central beliefs and practices of other major world religions.

Taking account of the call for the promotion in pupils of a non-religious spirituality (National Curriculum Council 1993), this section of the questionnaire also asks whether religious education should help to develop in pupils such aspects of spirituality as experiencing feelings of awe, developing an awareness of self, appreciating human achievement, or being creative.

The second section addresses the questions of teachers' attitudes toward the allocation of curriculum time to religious education, the amount of time to be spent on Christianity in comparison with that spent on other religions, and whether the faith position of the teacher of religious education should have any bearing on their suitability for teaching the subject.

The third section asks for comment on reasons for possible difficulty in teaching religious education, for example, lack of in-service training, resources, or specialist staff, or insufficient knowledge of the religions or their sacred writings.

Taking account of government recommendations for pupils' moral development (National Curriculum Council 1993), the fourth section asks whether religious education should contribute to pupils' moral development by encouraging them, for example, to keep promises, tell the truth, respect those in authority, and show tolerance towards those with views different from their own.

The fifth and sixth sections address the issue of how teachers may promote pupils' spiritual development in the context of teaching Christianity. They address the issue from the perspective of the recommendation of *Circular 1/94*, that pupils should be encouraged to 'consider the response of religion' to fundamental questions about the purpose of being, and from this develop their own responses to such matters (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4).

Section five asks to what extent teachers agree that religious education should encourage pupils to develop their own response to aspects of faith that Christians may consider of fundamental significance. The statements in this section are those that were most frequently mentioned when groups of Christians from a Methodist

church and an Anglican church were asked, in the context of the present research, what aspects of their faith were most important to them. For example, teachers are asked to what extent religious education should help pupils to find comfort in seeing God as their heavenly Father, expecting answers to prayer, or believing they will see loved ones again in heaven.

Section six defines the 'fundamental questions' addressed by Christianity in terms of some of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. It asks to what extent teachers agree that religious education should help pupils to believe, for example, that God created the world, that Jesus was born of a virgin, that Jesus rose from the dead, or that the Bible is the inspired word of God. Some of the statements can be found in the Christian creeds, others relate to Bible texts.

The last page invites teachers to comment upon any aspects of teaching religious education about which they are unhappy. The rest of the page is left blank for this purpose, apart from an expression of appreciation for the help provided by the completion of the questionnaire.

Sample

The teacher sample comprises the head of religious education in each of the 31 non-denominational secondary schools, maintained by the local education authority, in Cornwall. Of these, 12 are male and 19 female. Four-fifths (25) of the heads of religious education are members of a Christian denomination, and of these, the majority (20) attend church regularly. Of the 31 secondary schools, 18 teach pupils up to the age of 16, and 13 up to the age of 18. The schools range in size from 480 to 1,590 pupils.

The sample involves heads of department rather than all teachers of religious education. It was felt that the heads of religious education would characterise if not control the teaching approach to be found overall in their departments, that their selection would result in a sample likely to produce a high response rate, and that a small sample would simplify analysis of the data. The purpose of the teacher survey was primarily to enable categorisation of the schools.

A copy of the teachers' questionnaire was sent to the head of religious education in each of the 31 state maintained secondary schools in Cornwall in February 1995. It was accompanied by a personal letter that asked each teacher to participate in a Cornwall religious education survey and explained the aims and purpose of the whole project. The project was supported in principle by the Adviser for Religious Education in Cornwall.

Response

Approximately half of the teachers had responded by the end of the spring term and of the remainder, all except two responded quickly to a telephone reminder. A further letter achieved a final response. By mid-June 1995 all 31 teachers had returned their questionnaires, thus giving a response rate of 100%. Just one teacher chose not to respond to any of the attitudinal questions in part two, and requested that her pupils did not participate in the survey. Over half of the teachers (19) added comments to expand some of their responses, and six teachers filled in the last page of the questionnaire, which asked teachers to comment on any aspect of the way they were required to teach religious education with which they might feel unhappy. It was clear that teachers had given considerable thought to their responses.

Analysing the data

The data were analysed by means of the SPSS statistical package (SPSS Inc., 1988).

Analysis of the data focused upon categorising each school first in terms of a teaching approach that related to curriculum content', namely, minimalist or adequate, 'in the main Christian' or 'world religions', and secondly, in terms of an approach that related to teaching method, namely, thematic or systematic, phenomenological or experiential.

Since a number of government-sponsored documents and the Cornwall agreed syllabus specified the time to be allocated to religious education at each key stage, it was felt that schools would be unwilling to self-identify as minimalist in their approach to the subject. Schools are therefore placed in this category according to a number of criteria provided by teachers' responses to particular questions. Similarly, it was felt that since Christianity was required to be taught 'in the main', schools

would be unwilling to self-identify as failing to fulfil that requirement. Again, schools are placed in this category according to a number of criteria provided by teachers' responses to particular questions. In the cases where schools are categorised according to teaching methods, the main criterion for categorisation is self-identification. The following sections present the criteria for identifying each approach.

Identifying a minimalist approach

Research has indicated that one of the main reasons why many schools have failed to deliver adequate religious education has been a shortage of teachers with specialist training in the subject (Institute of Christian Education 1954, Alves 1968, Orchard 1991, 1993). The present research therefore seeks to discover whether schools have a shortage of specialist teachers. The data show that over half (17) of the schools have just one religious education specialist, over a quarter (7) have 2 specialists, 3 schools have 3 specialists and 2 schools have 4 specialists. These figures are significant when related to total numbers of staff. Around three-quarters (23) of the schools have proportionately just one religious education specialist in staff numbers ranging from 32 to 65. In one school there is just one religious education specialist in 80 members of staff. Two schools have no member of staff with a professional qualification in religious education, one of these schools having 80 members of staff. A school is categorised as 'minimalist' in its approach to religious education when poor provision of specialist staff, judged proportionately, is combined with others of the following factors.

Circular 1/94 (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 19) states that 'the head teacher and governing body must ensure that sufficient time and resources are given to RE in school to meet the statutory requirements'. A second indicator of a school's commitment to religious education is therefore the allocation of curriculum time to the subject. In most schools there is a wide variation in the allocation for Key Stage 3 and for Key Stage 4, and for examination and non-examination groups.

Circular 1/94 recommends that 45 hours per year be allotted to religious education at Key Stage 3 (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 39). The 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus also specifies 45 hours per year for Key Stage 3. Yet two-thirds of

the schools (22) surveyed in 1995 fail to offer the recommended number of hours throughout this key stage. The majority of these allow 30 to 39 hours per year. A possible explanation of this widespread shortfall may be attributable to the fact that in many schools lessons are 25 to 30 minutes in length, two lessons per week thus giving 30 to 39 hours per year in a school year comprising 38 to 39 weeks. If this is so, these schools are not necessarily indicating a minimalist approach to religious education. However, two schools offer only 20 to 29 hours throughout the key stage, one school offers only 20 to 29 hours in year 8, one school less than 20 hours in years 8 and 9, and one school less than 20 hours in year 7. These last 5 schools can be considered as minimalist with regard to their allocation of time for religious education at Key Stage 3.

Circular 1/94 recommends that 'around 40 hours per year' be allotted to religious education at Key Stage 4 (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 39). The 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus recommends around 65 hours over the whole of Key Stage 4 (i.e. two years) should be allotted to religious education. If apportioned equally, this means that schools should allocate around 32 hours to religious education for each of years ten and eleven.

For those pupils who do not take religious education as an examination subject, in year ten 21 schools allocate less than 30 hours to religious education. Of these schools, 12 schools offer less than 20 hours and 3 schools offer none at all. In year eleven, 26 schools allocate less than 30 hours to religious education. Of these schools, 15 schools offer less than 20 hours, 7 schools offer none at all. Thus half the schools are seriously failing to give adequate religious education in year ten, two-thirds in year eleven. These statistics may be partially explained by the fact that only 10 schools teach religious education to non-examination pupils as a separate subject at this key stage. Instead, almost half of the schools (14) teach religious education as part of a personal and social education course, and 6 schools, within humanities or foundation studies, or in modules. One teacher comments that it is difficult to assess the number of hours given to religious education where the subject is fully integrated. It seems that where the subject is fully integrated within a humanities or personal and social education course, or taught in modules, the hours set aside for the subject are, in most cases, minimal.

Just over half the schools (17) offer religious studies for GCSE. In all of these schools around 50 hours per year are allocated to religious studies. In many of these cases time allocation for religious education is poor for non-examination pupils, very good for examination pupils. This is taken into account when identifying the schools.

Schools are identified as minimalist in their approach to approach to religious education by using as criteria the information relating to specialist staffing, allocation of curriculum time, the related issue of whether religious education is taught discretely or as part of a wider course, and whether schools offer religious studies for GCSE examination. Schools with poor provision in at least three of these areas are identified as minimalist in their approach to religious education.

Identifying an adequate approach

The research uses the same criteria for identifying a minimalist approach to religious education to identify schools with an adequate approach. The data show that 6 schools have one specialist teacher in numbers ranging from 16 to 29 members of staff. In comparison with the figures suggesting poor provision of specialist teachers (see above), these schools can be considered to have an adequate number of specialist teachers. A school is categorised as 'adequate' in its approach to religious education when adequate provision of specialist staff, judged proportionately, is combined with others of the following factors.

As noted above, the 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus and *Circular 1/94* specify that 45 hours per year be allotted to religious education at Key Stage 3. A second indicator of a school's commitment to religious education is therefore the allocation of curriculum time to the subject. A third (9) of the schools offer the recommended number of hours throughout Key Stage 3.

Circular 1/94 recommends that 'around 40 hours per year' be allotted to religious education at Key Stage 4 (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 39). The 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus recommends around 65 hours over the whole of Key Stage 4 (i.e. two years) should be allotted to religious education. If apportioned equally, this means that schools should allocate around 32 hours to religious education for

each of years ten and eleven. In this instance, 10 schools comply with the requirements of the Cornwall agreed syllabus in that they allocate at least 30 to 39 hours for religious education in year ten, but in year eleven just 5 schools offer this amount of time. The figures for year ten may relate to the fact that 10 schools teach religious education to non-examination pupils as a separate subject at this key stage. This may not be so in year eleven. The data do not provide this information. Thus one in three schools are providing adequate time for religious education in year ten, but less than one in six in year eleven.

Where religious studies are offered for GCSE, and for examination pupils, provision is good. Just over half the schools (17) offer religious studies for GCSE, 16 schools teaching the subject in years ten and eleven, one in year eleven only. In whichever year the subject is taught, 13 schools allow at least 50 hours per year for teaching the subject, the remainder offering slightly less, but supplementing where necessary with lessons outside normal school hours. These schools can be described as adequate in their approach.

Using as criteria the information relating to specialist staffing, allocation of curriculum time, the related issue of whether religious education is taught discretely or as part of a wider course, and whether schools offer religious studies for GCSE examination, it is possible to identify schools with an adequate approach to religious education. Schools with adequate provision in at least three of these areas can be considered adequate in their approach to religious education.

Identifying an 'in the main Christian' approach

Circular 1/94 states that the content relevant to Christianity should predominate at each key stage. Teachers are therefore asked whether all pupils study Christianity at Key Stage 3, and all pupils at Key Stage 4. All Key Stage 3 pupils study Christianity, but in a quarter (9) of the schools not all Key Stage 4 pupils study Christianity. This may be explained by the fact that non-examination Key Stage 4 pupils in 3 schools receive no religious education and in a further 12 schools receive very little. In these latter cases religious education is subsumed into humanities or personal, social and moral education courses. This suggests that a religious component, whether Christian or relating to other religions, may not be identifiable

in such courses. However, of these 9 schools where not all pupils are taught Christianity, 4 schools teach Christianity to some pupils for GCSE examination. In all, 12 schools out of 17 offering religious studies for GCSE examination offer Christianity, taught as a world religion, two further schools offer a study of the synoptic gospels, and one school offers the study of one gospel. This might suggest that these 15 schools show a commitment to teaching 'Christianity in the main'.

Since the Bible contains the foundational and essential literature of the Christian faith, a further indicator of schools' commitment to teaching Christianity 'in the main' may be the presence in schools of class sets of Bibles. Each school has at least one version of the Bible available in class sets, but 17 schools have more than one version available, one school having 6 versions, 3 schools having 5, and one school having 4 versions. All schools have a modern translation available in class sets, the most popular being the Good News Bible, available in 19 schools. The presence of class sets of Bibles in modern versions in all schools might suggest that all adhere to the legal requirement for religious education to be 'in the main Christian'. However, subsequent questions reveal that in some schools the Bibles may be little used.

Just a quarter (8) of the heads of religious education report frequent use of the Bible at Key Stage 3, and 6 report frequent use at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 3 almost half of the schools (15) occasionally use the Bible, 8 schools seldom. At Key Stage 4 just a quarter (8) occasionally use the Bible, a similar number (7) seldom, and 10 never. One teacher states that as some textbooks include Bible passages to fit the selected topics, this obviates the need for pupils to use Bibles. Since the 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus includes much biblical material, this argument suggests a lack of commitment to teaching 'Christianity in the main'. On the contrary, frequent use of the Bible can be considered a prime indicator of an 'in the main Christian' approach to religious education.

A further indicator of attention to 'Christianity in the main' might be that despite time restrictions, almost half of the schools occasionally take Key Stage 3 pupils to visit Christian churches, and 5 schools occasionally take Key Stage 4 pupils to Christian churches. Additionally, 5 schools are visited by leaders of Christian churches once a month, and a further 12 schools have such visits once a term. The

fact that these schools enable their pupils to have contact with practising Christians suggests that these schools wish to teach Christianity effectively, and might suggest a commitment to teaching Christianity 'in the main'.

Initially it was considered that further indicators of schools that are committed to teaching Christianity 'in the main' could be found in responses to the questions in the second part of the questionnaire, which looks at teachers' attitudes toward various aspects of religious education.

For example, the first set of questions asks whether religious education should help pupils to understand what Buddhism is, what Christianity is, and so on through each religion. All teachers agree that pupils should be helped to understand Christianity, suggesting that all teachers are committed to teaching Christianity 'in the main'. This conclusion is supported by the fact that 11 teachers are uncertain about promoting understanding of one or more of the other religions, 2 teachers feel that understanding Buddhism should not be promoted at all, and one teacher feels the same about Sikhism. Yet when teachers are asked whether religious education should help pupils to understand the central beliefs and central practices of 'other major world religions', all teachers agree that this should be so. Similar discrepancies are found throughout the attitudinal responses, indicating a lack of established attitudes on the part of most teachers. One teacher wrote that he wanted to encourage faith in Christianity but, if he were to act professionally, he could only do so if he did the same for all other world religions.

In response to a further set of questions measuring attitude, there are differences of opinion over the amount of time to be given to Christianity, compared with that allowed for the other religions. Almost three-quarters of the teachers (22) disagree with the statement that Christianity should be allotted the same amount of time in the religious education curriculum as the other world religions, with 5 teachers considering that Christianity should be given 75% or more of the time. Yet only 14 are happy with the suggestion that Christianity should be given more than 50% of RE time. One teacher asks that Christianity should be allowed between 50% and 60% of the time, and comments, 'Christianity is the main faith in the U.K., at the moment,

but we're a multifaith country too'. There appears to be some confusion over this issue.

There was little consistency in many of the teachers' answers, and for this reason it was decided that these responses should not be used to differentiate between school approaches, although a study of teachers' attitudes in its own right could be of research interest. The criteria for identifying school approaches to religious education are thus drawn mainly from the first part of the questionnaire.

The following criteria have been used to identify schools with an 'in the main Christian' approach to religious education: whether all pupils are taught Christianity, whether schools offer Christianity or the study of one or more of the gospels for GCSE examination, whether pupils at each of the key stages use the Bible frequently, and whether schools encourage pupil contact with Christians, either by inviting Christians to participate in lessons or by taking pupils to visit churches. Since in the Cornwall agreed syllabus biblical material forms the major subject matter for the study of Christianity, it is used as the main criterion for identifying schools with an 'in the main Christian' approach to religious education. Schools that fulfil the 'frequent use of Bible' criterion and at least two other criteria are categorised as having an 'in the main Christian' approach.

Identifying a 'world religions' approach
The 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus identifies the 'other principal religions' practised in Britain as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. These coincide with those identified by the *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994). *Circular 1/94* does not specify the religions but states that, whilst the content relevant to Christianity must predominate at each key stage, all of the principal religions represented in Britain must be included in the syllabus as a whole (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35). The 1993 Cornwall syllabus does not specify which religions are to be taught at which key stages. This meant that the Cornish secondary schools needed to teach all five 'other religions', since most secondary schools received pupils from a number of primary

schools and each primary school was free to choose which of the five 'other religions' to include in its religious education curriculum.

The 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus recommends that Christianity and two other religions should be taught at Key Stage 4, but does not specify the number of religions to be taught at the earlier key stages. It gives examples of topics to be studied for each of the six religions both at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, reinforcing the view that secondary schools should teach each of the six religions. Although stating in its preface that the syllabus reflects the fact that Christianity is the main religious tradition of Britain, the layout of the suggested programmes of study for each key stage does not make this clear. The content to be studied for each religion is placed in six columns, with no instruction relating to balance between the religions. In most cases the columns contain similar quantities of material. This might suggest to schools that they should spend as much time teaching the other religions as teaching Christianity. Indeed, in conversation with teachers during the course of the research project a number of teachers expressed the view that, since pupils were unlikely to have any contact with members of other faiths until leaving Cornwall to seek employment, they should focus upon teaching the other religions.

The teacher questionnaire asks whether all pupils study at least one religion other than Christianity at Key Stage 3, and whether all study at least one other religion at Key Stage 4. In all except one school all Key Stage 3 pupils study another religion, but in 13 schools not all pupils study another religion at Key Stage 4. It must be remembered that non-examination Key Stage 4 pupils in 3 schools receive no religious education and in a further 12 schools receive very little. Where religious education is subsumed into humanities or personal, social and moral education courses the religious element may be minimal or non-existent. However, of the 13 schools where not all pupils study another religion at Key Stage 4, 3 schools teach Judaism for GCSE examination. In all, 5 schools teach Islam for GCSE, 4 schools Judaism, and 3 schools Hinduism. Where schools offer non-Christian religions for GCSE examination, this is used as one of the factors indicating a commitment to a 'world religions' approach.

Since the 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus includes much biblical material, failure to use the Bible as a resource for teaching Christianity might suggest a 'world religions' rather than a 'Christianity in the main' approach to religious education. At Key Stage 3, 8 schools seldom use the Bible. At Key Stage 4, 7 schools seldom use the Bible, 8 schools never use it. The questionnaire does not ask about the availability and use of the sacred writings of the other religions. Enquiries in the preparatory stages of the questionnaire had shown that whereas a very small number of schools might have one copy of the Qur'an, for example, most schools did not have copies of the sacred writings of the other religions. Instead, schools relied on textbooks for selected passages.

A further indicator of a 'world religions' approach might be how often schools take pupils to visit non-Christian places of worship, and how often leaders of other faiths take part in religious education lessons. Just 3 schools occasionally take pupils to visit non-Christian places of worship, and only one teacher reports visits by leaders of other faiths once a term, the remaining schools rarely or never having such visits. However, such findings do not necessarily indicate lack of interest in other religions. As one teacher points out, the nearest non-Christian place of worship is, for her school, approximately ninety miles away, and few members of non-Christian faiths live in Cornwall. If schools try, in these difficult circumstances, to enable their pupils to have contact with members of non-Christian faith communities it might suggest that these schools are likely to have a 'world religions' approach.

One set of questions is concerned with the proportion of time to be spent in studying the 'other religions' in comparison with that spent on studying Christianity. Whilst almost half the teachers agree that Christianity should be given more than 50% of RE time, 9 teachers disagree. Of these 9 teachers, 3 teachers think that Christianity should be given the same time as the other religions, one teacher is uncertain on this point, and 5 teachers think Christianity should be given less time. These findings might suggest that these 9 teachers wish to treat all religions equally.

Further questions relating to teachers' attitudes draw mixed responses. For example, in response to a set of questions asking teachers for their attitudes toward members of other faiths teaching religious education, three-quarters (25) of the teachers

express the view that members of any of the religions should be able to teach the subject. Just 4 teachers express uncertainty, and 2 did not respond to these questions. Yet when teachers are asked whether religious education should help pupils to understand the sacred writings of the other religions and apply their teachings to their own lives, responses differ according to the religion in question. These ambiguities and others indicate a lack of consistent attitudes toward world religions, and so these responses have not been used as indicators of a 'world religions' approach to religious education. The criteria for identifying school approaches to religious education are thus drawn mainly from the first part of the questionnaire.

The following criteria have been used to identify schools with a 'world religions' approach to religious education: whether all pupils are taught at least one other religion at both key stages, whether schools offer the study of a religion other than Christianity for GCSE examination, whether schools make little use of the Bible in teaching Christianity, and whether schools encourage pupil contact with members of non-Christian religions. Schools that fulfil at least three of these criteria are categorised as having a 'world religions' approach to religious education.

The preceding sections have presented the criteria used to identify schools according to their religious education content. The next sections will identify schools according to their teaching methods, namely, thematic, systematic, phenomenological, or experiential.

Identifying a thematic approach

As noted earlier (see chapter one), at the time of the teacher survey (1995) a thematic approach was associated almost exclusively with teaching a number of religions via themes common to all, such as prayer, or pilgrimage, for example. The national model syllabuses expressed misgivings over an approach that took an aspect of a religion out of the context of the whole, yet most textbooks in use in the schools involved in the survey tended to favour this approach. The 1993 Cornwall syllabus, following in the tradition of earlier syllabuses, also tends to favour a thematic approach. Since it was felt that teachers would be happy to identify their teaching in

these terms, they were simply asked to state whether pupils studied religions thematically or separately.

Identifying a systematic approach

As noted earlier (see chapter one), a systematic approach involves teaching religions separately, or teaching 'vertically down the faiths' (Cornwall County Council Education Committee 1995: 29, 39). The 1995 Cornwall syllabus, beginning to be used at the time of the teacher survey, states that if a systematic approach is used, reference must be made to relevant human experiences each time a faith is studied. Attention is drawn to the fact that a column in each programme of study indicates areas of key human experience that can link the experiences of pupils and their families with the knowledge and understanding of a religion. This suggests a preference for a thematic approach, since a condition is attached to this approach but not to the use of a thematic approach. Teachers would have been aware of the contemporary use of the term 'thematic approach', perhaps less so of the word 'systematic'. Accordingly, they were asked to state whether pupils studied religions thematically or separately.

Identifying a phenomenological approach

A phenomenological approach contrasts with an experiential approach. A phenomenological approach is assumed to be an objective, detached approach to the study of religions. It is seen as a cognitive approach that relates strongly to the first 'Attainment Target' of the model syllabuses, 'Learning about Religions'. It is an approach that was adopted by most of the textbooks in use during the survey. Discussions with teachers across the county early in the research project had indicated that they were fully conversant with the concepts of the different approaches. Most understood 'phenomenological' to refer to a detached, evaluative approach with a focus on the external, public features of religions, such as rites of passage, festivals, and places of worship. They were therefore simply asked to identify their own particular teaching approach.

Identifying an experiential approach

An experiential approach seeks to link pupils' experiences with religious experience or teaching. The 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus, Attainment Target 1, states that

'through their Religious Education pupils should develop... [the] capacity to explore questions of meaning and purpose, understanding of religious and moral responses to these questions, [the] ability to evaluate such responses in terms of their own search for meaning in life' (Cornwall County Council Education Committee 1993). This is an affective approach that relates to the second 'Attainment Target' of the model syllabuses, 'Learning from Religions'. The 1993 syllabus suggests an experiential approach that seeks to link pupils' experiences with some aspects of a religion. As noted earlier, an alternative experiential approach might seek to develop pupils' self-awareness by meditation exercises. Discussions with teachers across the county early in the research project had indicated that they were fully conversant with the concepts of both approaches, but the questionnaire does not make a distinction. Teachers are merely asked to indicate whether they use an experiential approach.

Categorising the schools

The primary aim of the teacher survey was to categorise schools according to their approach to religious education. The earlier review of the relevant literature identified eight different approaches, four relating to content, four relating to teaching method.

Schools were identified as minimalist in their approach to approach to religious education by reference to the information relating to specialist staffing, allocation of curriculum time, the related issue of whether religious education was taught discretely or as part of a wider course, and whether schools offered religious studies for GCSE examination. Schools with poor provision in at least three of these areas were identified as minimalist in their approach to religious education. By this criterion, 8 schools came into the category of 'minimalist'. Of these, three schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey.

Schools were identified as adequate in their approach to religious education by reference to the same information as above. Schools with adequate provision in at least three of these areas were identified as adequate in their approach to religious education. By this criterion, 23 schools came into the category of 'adequate'. Of these, 5 schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey.

Schools that used the Bible frequently and fulfilled at least two of the other criteria used to identify an 'in the main Christian' approach to religious education, such as offering the study of Christianity for GCSE examination, or encouraging pupil contact with Christians, were categorised as having this approach. In all, 9 schools came into this category. Of the 9 schools where the approach was 'in the main Christian', two schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey.

Schools that fulfilled at least three of the criteria used to identify a 'world religions' approach to religious education, such as, offering the study of a religion other than Christianity for GCSE examination, or encouraging pupil contact with members of non-Christian religions, were categorised as having this approach. In all, 22 schools came into this category. Of the 22 schools with a 'world religions' approach, 6 schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey.

Teachers were asked directly whether their pupils studied religions thematically or separately. In 6 schools religions were taught thematically, in 12 systematically and in 13 both approaches were used. The latter were categorised as 'mixed'. Of the 6 schools that were categorised as thematic in approach, one school did not allow its pupils to participate in the pupil survey. Of the 12 schools that were categorised as systematic in their approach, 2 schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey. Of the 13 schools that were categorised as 'mixed' in approach, 5 schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey.

Teachers were also asked, 'Which of the following *best* describes your approach to teaching RE?' and were asked to tick against phenomenological, experiential or confessional. A number of teachers had ticked against both phenomenological and experiential, some adding the comment that different approaches might be used with different ability groups, or to suit different topics. Schools using a combination of approaches were classified as 'mixed' in terms of this type of approach. One teacher reported a combination of phenomenological, experiential and confessional approaches. This teacher is the only one to include the latter. Since his responses to later statements in the questionnaire indicate that it was not his intention to proselytise, he was not placed in an individual category but was simply categorised as having a 'mixed' approach.

In total, 16 teachers were identified as having a phenomenological approach, 6 as having an experiential approach, and 9 a combination of approaches. Of the 16 schools that were categorised as phenomenological in approach, 4 schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey. All 6 schools that were categorised as experiential in their approach allowed their pupils to participate in the pupil survey. Of the 9 schools that were categorised as 'mixed' in approach, 4 schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey.

To summarise these data, of the 31 state-maintained secondary schools in Cornwall, 8 schools did not allow their pupils to participate in the pupil survey. The spiritual and moral attitudes of pupils in the remaining 23 schools were to be evaluated in the light of different school approaches to religious education. Of these 23 schools, 5 were categorised as minimalist in their approach, 18 schools as adequate; 7 schools as 'in the main Christian' in their approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Additionally, 5 schools were categorised as teaching the religions thematically, 10 schools as teaching the religions systematically, and 8 schools as teaching by both methods, a mixed approach. A further 12 schools were categorised as having a phenomenological approach, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 5 schools as having a mixture of these approaches.

Teacher attitudes

The preceding sections have shown that teachers' responses to the factual questions produced sufficient information to enable the categorisation of schools according to their different approaches, thus fulfilling the primary aim of the teacher survey. A secondary finding came from the fact that little of the attitudinal material could be used to categorise school approaches. Teachers were generally inconsistent and contradictory in their responses, showing a lack of established attitudes. In contrast, the data from the final section of the teacher questionnaire show that the majority of teachers are agreed that religious education should not help pupils to find faith in traditional biblical beliefs. There is little uncertainty in this area, and few teachers express a positive response. In the few instances of positive response, there are inconsistencies. For example, one teacher agrees strongly that pupils should apply the teaching of the Bible to their own lives and that religious education should help pupils to believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, that Jesus is the Son of

God, that he rose from the dead, and that he will return in glory one day. Yet the same teacher disagrees strongly that religious education should help pupils to believe that Jesus was born of a virgin. Another teacher agrees strongly that pupils should apply the teaching of the Bible to their own lives, and that religious education should help pupils to believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, that Jesus died to save people from their sins and that he rose from the dead. Yet this teacher disagrees that religious education should help pupils to believe that God will ultimately judge people's lives, or that Christians go to heaven when they die. It seems that teachers' personal beliefs influence their views on what teaching Christianity in religious education should achieve.

Over half of the teachers (19) added comments at the end of the questionnaire, thus providing a small amount of qualitative material. These comments point primarily to the tension in seeking to teach religion in a way that is affective but not indoctrinatory. In response to the last two sets of questions asking whether religious education should encourage pupils to find comfort in, or believe in, certain Christian precepts, one teacher states that pupils should be 'encouraged by their experiences elsewhere, for example, in home or chapel'. He continues, 'RE may help them to believe, but it is not the aim'. A second teacher comments, 'We can help pupils to believe if they want to and are interested, but we are not to use RE as an avenue for evangelism (the work of the church)'. A third teacher states 'I'm afraid I disagree strongly with these issues and the role of the RE teacher. I see my role as teaching youngsters what the beliefs of religious groups are, and how those beliefs influence and affect the lives of the believers'. A fourth teacher sums up some of the tensions felt by those who are aware of their responsibilities as educators, but as Christians wish to express care for their pupils in ways they believe to be beneficial. He states,

> A Christian teacher, like myself, must remain neutral and objective, giving a balanced view and emphasis to all religions. I found this exercise "painful" therefore, since it caused me to be pulled in different directions. I wanted as a Christian to answer as an evangelical Christian but I was always conscious of the restraints of the professional responsibilities I have and must respect as a Christian. Of course I wanted to answer 'agree strongly' for all the statements on helping pupils to find comfort in the teachings of the Bible and to find faith in the Christian statements of belief, but could only answer positively if the statements reflected the beliefs of all other world religions.

Such comments suggest that teachers do not encourage pupils to 'develop their own response' to the response of religion to fundamental questions (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4), either because they consider it educationally incorrect, or they are afraid of indoctrinating pupils, or are afraid of treating religions unequally. It appears that the emphasis on promoting tolerance and respect for those of other religious beliefs, mentioned in the 1993 Cornwall syllabus and in *Circular 1/94*, may preclude teachers from encouraging Christian beliefs.

In the 1993 Cornwall agreed syllabus Attainment Target 1 states that an education that gives pupils the capacity to explore questions of meaning and purpose, to understand religious and moral responses to these questions, and to evaluate such responses in terms of their own search for meaning in life, is not indoctrination. Nevertheless, the data show that most teachers do not feel free to promote pupils' spiritual and moral development, understood in terms of personal response to religion, or 'learning from religion', in the context of teaching Christianity.

It seems that this period of intense government interest in religious education provided teachers with increasing knowledge of the subject in terms of content and teaching methods, but confusion or mixed feelings toward teaching religious education.

Summary

The aim of the teachers' survey was primarily to categorise each school according to its approach to teaching religious education. To achieve this, information relating to provision for religious education, teaching methodology and teachers' attitudes toward the subject was gathered and analysed. This chapter has described the processes involved in setting up the teacher survey, analysing the data, and categorising the schools. The following chapter will describe the construction and piloting of a questionnaire designed to assess the impact of each of the school approaches to religious education on pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Chapter Six

The pupil survey: research design and pilot study

Overview

The preceding chapter described the setting up of the teacher survey and the resulting categorisation of schools according to their different approaches to religious education. This chapter will describe the setting up of the pupil survey, which aimed to discover year ten pupils' learning experiences in religious education and provide a means of assessing pupils' spiritual and moral development in the context of their religious education. It will describe the construction of the pupil questionnaire, the pre-testing of the questionnaire in a pilot study and the resulting modification of the questionnaire. It will then describe the composition of the final survey sample and the characteristics of the respondents. It will conclude by describing the methods of data analysis to be employed in the final survey.

Pupil questionnaire

The present research draws upon earlier research studies to provide items to measure pupils' spiritual and moral development. Set in the context of government requirements for religious education, it also broadly follows OFSTED's suggestions for assessing pupils' spiritual and moral development. Acknowledging the difficulties in assessing 'development' in a short period of time, OFSTED (1994: 6, 7) recommended that evidence of 'development' should be assessed first in terms of a school's provision in the curriculum for pupils' spiritual and moral development, and secondly in terms of pupils' responses to a school's provision. OFSTED identified pupils' attitudes and values as indicators of pupils' spiritual and moral development. OFSTED also pointed out that assessment must recognise that pupils' development is affected by factors other than the school's provision. The list of factors included age, personality, gender, family and cultural background and more generally the moral, spiritual and cultural climate of the communities to which pupils belong.

The pupil questionnaire takes all of these factors into account. It sets out to examine pupils' experiences of provision for religious education in terms of resources, curriculum content and teaching methods, and to assess the pupils' attitudes and values as indicators of pupils' spiritual and moral development. The questionnaire measures pupils' spiritual and moral development in terms of attitudes toward religious education, Christian belief and spiritual experience, and moral issues. It

also takes account of the factors other than school provision that might affect such development.

In order to encourage pupils to participate, the questionnaire begins by explaining to the pupils the overall purpose of the survey, namely, that of discovering what year ten pupils think about life in general and about religion, thus allowing the voice of young people to be clearly heard. It asks pupils to be as honest as possible, stressing that there are no right or wrong answers, and asks that they try to answer all the questions. It stresses that the researchers are interested in their views. The research conforms to ethical requirements by guaranteeing confidentiality, stating that pupils should not write their names on the booklet.

The questionnaire consists almost wholly of pre-coded or closed questions, employing multiple choice or Likert format, and offering a definite range of possible answers. This allows pupils to work quickly through the questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire pupils are invited to express their views on the survey, thus allowing for some qualitative data.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts. Part one aims to identify the factors apart from religious education that are likely to contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes. It seeks to establish each pupil's sex, academic ability, social class, religious allegiance and practice, parental religious practice, and television viewing habits. Part two is concerned with measuring personality. It comprises a personality inventory and a self-concept inventory. Part three is concerned with the content of the religious education received since a pupil's entry into secondary school, and the teaching methods experienced by pupils in religious education lessons. Part four is concerned with pupils' attitudes toward religious education, Christian belief and practice, Christian and non-religious experiences of spirituality, and moral issues.

Part one contains 25 questions. The majority of the questions are concerned with the factors apart from religious education that might influence pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes. Pupils are first asked to indicate whether they are male or female. Next, they are asked to suggest intelligence level, measured in terms of academic ability, by indicating the numbers and grades of passes at GCSE, A or AS Level they expect

to have acquired on leaving school. This set of questions will show whether the sample is balanced in terms of academic ability. Although schools were asked to ensure that whole year groups participated in the survey, it was recognised that not all schools would achieve this, and that the less able pupils might be excluded from the survey. If this were so, this would need to be accounted for when seeking to make generalisations from the research findings.

Next, a set of questions asks pupils to indicate the frequency and content of their television viewing. This is placed early in the questionnaire with the aim of engaging pupils' interest. Pupils are asked for how many hours they watched television 'last Wednesday', on how many days during the previous week, and with what frequency they watch soaps, sport, light entertainment, current affairs, films about the occult, and violent/horror films. Frequency of watching each category of television programme in turn is measured on a four point scale: 'at least once a week', 'at least once a month', 'occasionally' or 'never'.

Next, a set of questions asks about membership of a religious group or church-sponsored group, frequency of church attendance, private prayer and Bible reading, and parental religious commitment. Pupils are asked whether they have attended a Christian church within the last year for any special services, such as a wedding, Christmas day, harvest festival. They are asked to indicate membership of church or other religious group, and attendance at church activities such as Bible study group, church youth group or choir. Frequency of church attendance is measured on a five point scale: 'never', 'once or twice a year', 'sometimes', 'at least once a month', or 'nearly every week'. Frequency of private Bible reading and private prayer is measured on a five point scale: 'never', 'occasionally', 'at least once a month', 'at least once a week', or 'nearly every day'.

Pupils are also asked if they pray in times of special need, measured on a two point scale: 'yes', or 'no', and whether they have been baptised as a child, or admitted to adult membership of a church. These items are measured on a three point scale: 'yes', 'no', or 'don't know'. The frequency of parental church attendance is measured on a six point scale: 'never', 'once or twice a year', 'sometimes', 'at least once a month', 'nearly every week', or 'don't know'.

Finally, in order to determine the social class of the respondent, part one of the questionnaire concludes by asking for details of parental employment.

Part two is concerned with providing a psychological profile of the pupils and a measure of self-esteem, identified in government-sponsored documents as an indicator of both spiritual and moral attitude. The abbreviated form of the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQR-A), developed by Francis, Brown and Philipchalk (1991) provides a psychological profile of the sample. In this the four personality dimensions of neuroticism, extraversion, psychoticism and a lie scale are measured by 6 items each. This 24 item instrument is scored on a two point scale: 'yes' or 'no'.

Self-esteem, identified as an indicator of spiritual development (National Curriculum Council 1993a) and of moral development (OFSTED 1994) is assessed in the questionnaire by the short form of the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (Coopersmith 1981), a 25 item instrument developed for use among school pupils. Items reflect either high self-esteem, for example, 'I'm a lot of fun to be with', or low self-esteem, for example, 'I often wish I were someone else'. Each item is scored on a two point scale: 'yes' or 'no'.

Part three is concerned with the content of the religious education received since a pupil's entry into secondary school, and the teaching resources used by pupils in religious education lessons. If pupils are to have sufficient knowledge and understanding to be able to express an opinion on the spiritual and moral issues under discussion, they need to have been taught the relevant content and in such a way as to promote understanding. The first 12 items question pupils' use of literary and audio-visual resources and a further 3 items question the frequency of visits by a speaker from a religious or non-religious group, thus replicating the questions in the teachers' questionnaire. Additionally, pupils are asked to indicate the frequency of class discussions, note-taking, or participating in experiential exercises such as acting out a religious ceremony, practising meditation, or exploring the development of psychic powers. These items are scored on a four point scale: 'often', 'occasionally', 'seldom', or 'never'.

The second set of questions is concerned with curriculum content. Pupils are asked what they have studied in religious education (RE) lessons since entering secondary school. The items comprise topics selected from those recommended for study by the *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) and incorporated in the 1995-2000 Cornwall syllabus, which was in use in all schools at the time of the pupil survey. Responses to the question 'Have you studied ...?' are scored on a two point scale: 'yes' or 'no'. First, the six religions specified by the model syllabuses are listed, namely, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, with the addition of 'New Age Religions', which have significant numbers of adherents in some parts of Cornwall. Next, the major denominations of the Christian church are listed, namely, Baptist, Church of England, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Society of Friends, and United Reformed Church/Presbyterian. Next, a number of Bible topics are suggested, 7 from the Old Testament and 20 from the New Testament, followed by 4 items describing features common to all religions, namely, initiation ceremonies, pilgrimage, marriage and funeral rites. Next, 6 sets of questions list the most frequently described distinctive practices or features of each of the six religions recommended by the model syllabuses. The final 20 items in this section comprise a selection of the moral issues most commonly found in textbooks used throughout the county.

Part four is concerned with pupils' attitudes toward religious education, Christian belief and practice, the occult, Christian and non-religious experiences of spirituality, and moral issues. It includes a number of attitude scales that have been used in previous studies, and have been shown to be valid and reliable. Responses to items are scored on a five point Likert scale, ranging from 'agree strongly', through 'agree', 'not certain', and 'disagree' to 'disagree strongly'.

Part four is divided into four main sections. The first section consists of 30 items relating to pupils' attitudes toward religious education and comprises a selection of both positive and negative statements typically made by pupils in response to the question, 'What do you think of RE?' The items view religious education from different perspectives: attitude toward religious education for its own sake, religious

education in relation to other subjects, lesson content, attitude toward the teacher, and religious education as a help to spiritual development.

The second section asks 'What do you believe?' The items in this section include measures of Christian spirituality suggested by the Christian literature reviewed in the second chapter of this dissertation. The first two items ask for a response to the statement 'I believe in God' and 'I have a religious faith', enabling classification of pupils as theists, agnostics or atheists and allowing for comparisons between each group's responses, for example, to moral issues. Two items identify Christian commitment: 'I regard myself as a Christian' and 'Jesus is my personal saviour'. Two items question a behavioural response to biblical teaching: 'I should obey the ten commandments', and 'I should try to follow Jesus' teaching'. A 12 item scale (items 4, 21-31) measures Christian fundamentalist belief (Gibson and Francis 1996), with 17 additional items (5, 6, 12-20, 32-37) relating to the Christian faith. Fundamentalist Christian belief is identified as such by the twin criteria of biblical authority as the only dependable guide for faith and practice, and the literal inerrancy of the Bible (Gibson and Francis, 1996: 250). The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (Francis 1978a) is a 24 item scale (items 42-65) measuring response to five key areas of the Christian tradition, namely, God, Jesus, the Bible, prayer and the Church. A set of 7 items deal with the topic of life after death (items 7, 8, 38-42). A set of 12 items relate to attitude toward the occult (items 67-78). These are selected in the main from those used in a major survey of year ten pupils' attitudes toward the supernatural (Boyd 1996: 228, 229).

The third and fourth sections build upon the researches of the Religious Experience Research Unit at Oxford (Hardy 1979), and continued in the Religious Experience Research Project at Nottingham University (Hay 1982, 1990). The third section asks whether pupils have ever been aware of some power beyond themselves, and whether such a power has in some way interacted with them. The fourth section includes a selection of the measures of 'spiritual development' suggested by the discussion paper on *Spiritual and Moral Development* (National Curriculum Council 1993a), such as awareness of transcendence, a sense of awe inspired by the natural world, being creative, or being aware of others. These items are, however, set in a religious context, since pupils are asked to respond to the statement 'I have felt close

to God when I have ....' for example, '... watched a beautiful sunset', '... produced a good painting'. The specific examples of situations that might act as stimuli for spiritual experiences were suggested by a random sample of 12 church-going teenagers, and include items relating to a church experience, such as attending a wedding, or listening to church music.

The fifth and final section of the questionnaire comprises 72 items concerned with moral issues, under the heading, 'How do you feel about right and wrong?' Each statement begins with the stem 'It is wrong to ...', in order to facilitate an exact comparison between different issues. Items to measure moral attitude were drawn from the recommendations of the National Curriculum Council discussion paper (1993a) and from the review of relevant Christian literature described earlier. The items can be grouped together in a number of ways to form attitude scales relating to different kinds of moral issues. For example, the items can be grouped according to personal morality, social/relational morality, and national/global morality, or in terms of, for example, environmental issues, sexual morality, human rights issues, and so on.

The last page of the questionnaire invites pupils to comment on the survey and thanks them for their help.

Pilot study

Borg and Gall (1989: 77-78) suggest that, in order to identify and overcome unforeseen problems, the entire research procedure should be carried out, including analysis of the data collected, following closely the procedures planned for the main study. They suggest that the sample should be drawn from a population similar to that of the main study, and large enough to allow for a variety of opinions. The pre-test form of the questionnaire should provide space for respondents to make comments about the questionnaire itself so that they may indicate any ambiguities and whether provision should be made for responses that are not included in the questionnaire. If items are left blank by a significant number of respondents this might indicate ambiguity and the items might best be omitted (Borg and Gall 1989: 435-436).

The pilot study in the present research followed these recommendations. The aims of the pilot study were: first, to assess the suitability of the measures to be used in the main study; secondly, to identify difficulties pupils might experience in completing the questionnaires; and thirdly to identify difficulties teachers might find in administering them.

Initially there was a need for some indication of the length of time needed to complete the proposed questionnaire. A draft copy of the questionnaire was given to two teenagers of widely differing academic ability to assess the length of time required for the completion of the questionnaires. It was estimated that the time required was between 20 and 30 minutes, which was thought to allow for the administration of the questionnaires during an average lesson time.

In July 1995 a state maintained secondary school was asked to administer the proposed questionnaire to its year ten pupils as a pilot study. The school is one of the larger county secondary schools in Cornwall but typical of most Cornish secondary schools in that it takes in pupils from a wide catchment area comprising both rural and urban areas, all with relatively high levels of low wages or unemployment.

The teacher survey identified this school as one that is not 'minimalist' in its approach to religious education. Christianity is taught 'in the main', and the Bible is used frequently, in modern versions. The head of religious education favoured a phenomenological, mainly systematic approach to teaching a number of religions.

Questionnaires were completed by 98 year ten pupils. The sample comprised 40% of the whole year-group, and it was requested that the pupils selected for the pilot study should represent the full range of academic ability. However, the data indicate that the sample consisted mainly of pupils of average to above average ability, and it was noted that this factor would need to be considered when analysing the data provided by the main study.

The data were analysed to show the percentages of pupil endorsements of opinion statements, but attitude scales were not developed from the responses to test the

methodology, since the research methodology is already well established. The data provide information on pupils' religious affiliations and religious practice, psychological profiles, and other variables that need to be taken into consideration when assessing pupils' moral and spiritual attitudes. The data confirm the information provided by this particular teacher's questionnaire, that in this school Christianity has been taught in the greatest depth, together with attention to Judaism and Islam. There has been much less teaching on Hinduism and Sikhism, and very little on Buddhism. Most pupils record familiarity with most of the topics selected to assess moral attitudes. The data suggest that a high proportion of pupils have positive attitudes toward Christianity and the selected moral issues.

The first aim of the pilot study was to assess the suitability of the measures to be used in the main study. The analysis of the data indicated that the chosen measures would provide the required data.

The second aim of the pilot study was to identify any difficulties pupils might experience in completing the questionnaires. The back page of the questionnaire was left blank apart from the heading 'Have you any helpful comments you would like to make about this survey?' This gave pupils an opportunity to express their opinions without the restrictions of pre-coded questions. Although all pupils completed the questionnaire, pupils' main criticisms were: first, that the questionnaire was too long; and secondly, that it was too repetitive. A third criticism was that it was too personal.

The questionnaire was therefore shortened in response to the first two criticisms. Questions relating to attitude toward the occult were omitted, since the findings of a research project dealing with this area and involving year ten pupils were about to be published (Boyd 1996). It was felt that duplication of the research at that particular time would be of little significant value. The 5 general questions asking pupils about awareness of 'a power beyond themselves' were removed, and the questions relating to specific spiritual experiences, under a heading in the pilot study referring to feeling 'close to God', were placed under the earlier 'power beyond themselves' heading. This related the first 10 questions in this section more directly to the evidences of the non-religious spirituality recommended by the National Curriculum

Council (1993a). A number of questions relating to Christian belief and practice were omitted, to avoid repetition, since similar questions were included in the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (1978). Since the research methodology required the use of attitude scales, the questions relating to pupils' attitudes toward their teacher were also omitted since they did not cohere with the rest of the items measuring attitude toward religious education. The length of the resulting questionnaire was thus shortened from 24 to 20 pages in length.

In response to the third criticism of the questionnaire it was requested, in the instructions sent to the teachers administering the questionnaires, that the anonymity of the pupils' responses should be stressed, with an assurance that this would be respected.

A further aim of the pilot study was to identify any difficulties teachers might have in administering the questionnaires. The findings of the teacher survey had shown that in many cases at Key Stage 4 religious education was subsumed into general humanities courses, personal, social and moral education courses, or short-term modular courses. The teacher administering the pilot survey suggested that in the cases where religious education might form a very small or ill-defined component of the curriculum, a religious education questionnaire might not be considered appropriate lesson content. Further, a non-specialist teacher might not feel suitably qualified to oversee a religious education survey.

For the results of the main study to be fully representative of all pupils' views, there was a need for responses from whole year groups. In view of the above considerations, in the main survey teachers were asked to administer the questionnaire to all year ten pupils, but if this were to prove unworkable, to involve year nine pupils instead. The teacher survey had indicated that in year nine religious education was taught in all schools as a discrete subject. The problems indicated above were therefore less likely to occur in year nine. Although this would weaken the potential for making generalisations about year ten pupils, the likelihood of a greater number of schools participating in the pupil survey was felt to outweigh this disadvantage.

Pupil survey

Sampling procedure

The aim for the pupil survey was to gather as large a sample as possible of pupils in year ten, that is, aged fourteen to fifteen years and in their penultimate year of statutory schooling. This took account of the view that young people are unlikely to grasp theological concepts before the commencement of formal operational thinking, around the age of thirteen years (c.f. Goldman 1964). It also tried to take account of the view that the impact of school religious education on pupils' attitudes can be best assessed by examining the responses of the pupils who have spent the longest time in secondary school (c.f. Alves 1968). However, it was decided not to ask for access to final year pupils in view of the examination pressures upon final year pupils and their teachers, and also in view of the fact that pupils leave school at different times throughout their final year.

The pupil survey took place during the spring and summer terms, 1996. The head of religious education and the headteacher in each school were sent a letter inviting them to include their pupils in a survey of religious education. In cases where a reminder letter produced no response, the schools were contacted by telephone.

Response

Of the 31 non-denominational secondary schools in Cornwall, all maintained by the local education authority, 23 returned pupil questionnaires, giving a school response rate of 74%. Of these, 8 schools offered year nine pupils and 16 schools (two-thirds of the sample) year ten pupils, one of these schools offering both a high proportion of pupils from year ten and a smaller group from year nine. In some cases schools were unwilling to involve year ten pupils in the surveys because of the pressures of examination work, but offered year nine pupils instead. Of the schools that did not participate in the survey, two heads of religious education stated in writing that they did not wish their pupils to participate, with no reasons given. Two teachers stated that they considered the questionnaires to contain evangelistic material and that they were therefore unsuitable for use in a non-denominational school. Two heads of religious education were on long-term sick leave and it was felt that the administration of the questionnaires would be problematic in these circumstances.

One head of religious education was consistently unobtainable, and one headteacher refused permission for his pupils to participate, giving no reason for his decision. In all, 3,090 completed questionnaires were returned.

For the survey results to be as fully representative as possible of pupils throughout Cornwall, teachers were requested to administer the questionnaires to whole year groups. In most cases, a high percentage of the total number of pupils in the year groups completed questionnaires. One head of religious education returned questionnaires from just 36% of the total number of pupils in year ten, with the comment that the school had a very high proportion of pupils with literacy problems, most of whom would be able to complete very little of the questionnaire. She had distributed questionnaires only to the more able pupils. One head of religious education completed the survey among year ten pupils and began to repeat the procedure with year nine pupils (45% of the total year group) before realising his mistake. When these two unrepresentative cases are excluded from the calculation, the percentages of returns from the total number of each year group ranged from 55% to 95%, the average pupil response rate being 77%. When the two unrepresentative cases are included, the average response rate was 74%.

Profile of the sample

This section provides a profile of the whole sample. It shows that the sample can be divided into sub-groups, which will enable comparisons to be made between the different groups. Sets of multiple-choice questions allow pupils to be grouped according to their sex, their academic ability, the frequency of their television viewing, their religious affiliation and practice, and parental religious practice. Each sub-group is described first in terms of the criteria for creating the groupings, then the composition of each sub-group is reported.

Sex

A substantial volume of research (see, for example, Kay and Francis 1996) has indicated that sex is a predictor of individual differences across a wide range of attitudes and values. Pupils are therefore asked to indicate whether they are male or female. The sample is almost equally divided according to sex, with 50.5% males and 49.5% females.

Academic expectations

A number of research studies (see, for example, Corey 1940, Argyle 1958) have indicated a relationship between intelligence and spiritual attitude. In the present research intelligence is assessed in terms of academic ability. Pupils are asked to indicate academic ability by suggesting the grades they expect to attain at GCSE or A Level. At this stage in their schooling pupils' work will have been thoroughly and repeatedly assessed, schools preparing to formally predict GCSE grades for their pupils. Pupils are likely therefore to be confident in such matters. Pupils' responses are used here as measures of intelligence.

Just 8% of the sample expect to have 4 or less GCSE passes at grades D to G when leaving school, with 7% expecting to gain 5 or more passes at these grades; one third of the sample (33%) expect to gain 1 to 4 GCSE passes at grades A to C, with two in seven (28%) expecting to gain 5 or more passes at these grades; additionally, just over a fifth (22%) expect to gain more than 1 A or AS Level passes, half of these expecting 3 or more passes at these levels. The least able pupils are the least well represented, perhaps owing to the literacy problems described by the teacher quoted above, perhaps indicating a higher proportion of absenteeism in this ability range.

Frequency of television viewing

The present research took place in the aftermath of the murder of James Bulger, a two-year-old killed by two ten-year-old boys. Media reports at the time (*Daily Mail*, 25.11.93, *Sunday Times*, 28.11.93) suggested a link between the boys' violence and their home viewing of a video depicting scenes of violence. Research has suggested that there is a relationship between television and aggressive behaviour (Huesmann and Eron 1986), and between television viewing and moral judgement (Tidhar and Peri 1990). Pupils are therefore asked for how many hours they watched television on a particular day the previous week, and on how many days during the previous week. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days. This suggests that for most pupils, television is likely to be a major influence in their lives. There were greater differences in the proportions of pupils who watched little and pupils who watched much television on the specified day in the previous week. Just one in six pupils watched for less than an hour (16%), whilst two-thirds (68%)

watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six (17%) watched for over four hours.

Religious affiliation and practice

Circular 1/94 (Department for Education 1994) and the *Model Syllabuses for Religious Education* (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994) recommended that the processes of learning about religion and learning from religion were to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. OFSTED (1994) acknowledged that school is not, however, the only influence on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Numerous research studies have indicated that there is a relationship between churchgoing and spiritual and moral attitudes. Pupils are therefore asked whether they are members of a religious group or are attend the meetings of a church-sponsored group, such as a Bible study group, church youth group or choir. They are asked about the frequency of church attendance, private prayer and Bible reading. They are asked whether they have attended a Christian church within the last year for any special services, such as a wedding, Christmas day, or harvest festival. Pupils are also asked if they pray in times of special need, and whether they have been baptised as a child, or admitted to adult membership of a church. They are asked too how often their parents attend church.

Of the whole sample, three in five of the pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, although 63% were baptised as children. Only a small number (8% of the whole sample) have been confirmed or admitted to adult membership of their faith community. Yet just over one third (37%) of the pupils claim allegiance to a church or other religious group, the majority (18% of the whole sample) belonging to the Church of England, with 6% belonging to the Methodist churches, 3% to the Roman Catholics, 2% to the Baptists, and 2% to Community churches. The sample includes very small numbers of members of other Christian denominations, 6 pupils belonging to Pentecostal churches, 5 to the United Reformed Church, 2 to the Salvation Army, one to the Greek Orthodox Church and one to the Quakers. The sample also includes very small numbers of members of other religions, 6 pupils claiming to be Buddhist, 2 Hindu, 2 Jewish, 3 Muslim, and one Sikh.

Although 37% of the pupils claim to belong to a faith community, just 5% of pupils attend a place of worship once a week, and 2% at least once a month. Thus of those who claim to belong to a religious group, only a fifth can be considered at all regular in attending the worship services of their community. Just 5% of the whole sample attend a church youth group, with between1% and 3% attending a Bible study group, prayer group, music group or church choir. Of those pupils who attend church very infrequently, 31% had attended a wedding in the last year, 22% a christening or baptism, 22% a funeral, 17% a school carol service, 16% a Christmas service, 11% a harvest service, and just 9% an Easter service and a Mothering Sunday service respectively.

The data presented above have indicated pupils' response to institutional religion. A further 3 items record pupils' private religious practices. Very few pupils read the Bible on their own - just 3% at least once a week and 16% occasionally. A slightly larger number pray alone - 9% at least once a week or more, 28% occasionally. A surprising 53% pray in times of special need. This supports the view that, whilst active membership of religious organisations continues to decline, belief in some sort of God is still a reality for many (Davie 1994: 74,75).

Parental church attendance

One further aspect of church influence is examined, that of parental church attendance. Just 10% of the pupils' mothers and 6% of fathers attend church or other place of worship once a month or more frequently. Just over half (57%) of the mothers and 67% of the fathers never attend church. Comparing these figures with those for pupils (7% of the sample attend a place of worship once a month or more frequently, 60% of the sample never attend a place of worship), there is no evidence of the significant generational decline in churchgoing described by Davie (1994: 121-127) and Richter and Francis (1998: 76,77). Pupils attend church slightly less frequently than their mothers, but more frequently than their fathers.

Overall, the data presented above indicate that the sample is almost equally divided according to sex, most pupils expect to achieve good or very good GCSE examination results, most pupils watch at least one to four hours of television on

most days, and the majority of the pupils have little contact with any form of church activity.

Plan for data analyses

Part three will present the findings of the pupil survey relevant to the research question, namely, the impact of different approaches to religious education on pupils' spiritual and moral development. These will be described and analysed in eleven chapters, the chapters dealing respectively with pupils' attitudes toward religious education, self, secular spiritual experience, Christian spiritual experience, Christianity, traditional Christian belief, personal choices regarding right and wrong, sex, drugs, property, and environmental issues. Each chapter will assess pupils' attitudes in the light of their school's approach to religious education, identified as minimalist or adequate, 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach, religions taught thematically or separately, or by a mixture of both approaches, religions taught phenomenologically or experientially, or by a mixture of both approaches. Additionally, each chapter will assess a number of influences external to the school that have been shown by previous research to influence pupils' attitudes toward spiritual and moral issues. These will include sex, church attendance, intelligence assessed in terms of academic expectations, and television viewing.

Each chapter will begin by developing a Likert-type attitude scale, or will use an established attitude scale. In cases where a new scale is developed, item rest of test correlations will identify, from a pool of items, those that cohere to produce the best homogenous and unidimensional scale expressing attitude toward the particular attitude object. The attitude scale will be composed of the responses of the whole sample toward each individual item. Each chapter will next present a table showing the whole sample percentage endorsements of attitude toward each item.

In order to compare the impact of different approaches to religious education, or the influence of other factors, on each of the attitude objects, in each chapter the whole sample will be divided into groups relating to each particular approach to religious education. The mean of the pupil scores in the attitude scales and the standard deviation will be calculated, and a test for statistical significance will be carried out to determine whether, where there are differences between the means, they could

have occurred by chance. Following the convention of sociological research (Kay and Francis 1996: 171), the level of significance will be set at 0.05. Each chapter will conclude by summarising then discussing the implications of the research findings.

Summary

This chapter has described the setting up of the pupil survey. It has described the construction of the pupil questionnaire, setting it in the contexts both of the contemporary educational scene and the existing body of research relating to the present research questions.

The chapter has continued by describing the pilot study and its findings, and the consequent modification of the questionnaire before its distribution to all participating schools. It has then described the sampling procedure for the main survey and the response, and has presented a detailed profile of the whole sample. Finally, the chapter has outlined the plan for the data analyses to be presented in the third and final part of the dissertation, to include the development of attitude scales to assess pupils' attitudes toward spiritual and moral issues. This chapter concludes part two of the dissertation. Part three will present the data provided by the pupil survey.

PART THREE

Listening to the Pupils

Chapter Seven

Attitude toward religious education

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Overview

The government of the mid-1990s called upon religious education to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Research into pupils' attitudes toward religious education has indicated that for most pupils religious education is not a popular subject, particularly when compared with most other subjects. Over the years efforts have been made to improve religious education. Different approaches to religious education have been developed, with a view to improving the status, resourcing and delivery of the subject. This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward the religious education of the mid-1990s.

The chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale to measure attitude toward religious education. Secondly, it provides a profile of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward the subject. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward the subject. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' attitudes toward religious education. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Attitude toward religious education: developing an attitude scale

In the present research attitude toward religious education is measured by means of a Likert-type attitude scale. This enables comparisons to be made between groups of pupils receiving different kinds of religious education with respect to their attitude toward the subject. It also allows a study of the relationship between attitude toward religious education and other variables in the survey.

The questionnaire used in the pupil survey contains 22 statements of both positive and negative opinions frequently expressed by pupils when questioned about their attitude to religious education. Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not

certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. From the pool of 22 items, item rest of test correlations have identified the 12 items that cohere to produce the best homogeneous and unidimensional scale measuring attitude toward religious education. These 12 items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 7.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.9227 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 7.1 Attitude toward religious education: scale properties

item	r
RE is usually interesting	0.7643
RE is a waste of time *	0.6949
I enjoy learning about different religions	0.7130
RE helps me to make sense of my life	0.6184
RE is boring *	0.7286
RE wastes time I could spend on exam subjects *	0.6548
I enjoy discussing moral problems in RE	0.6742
RE helps me to think about who I really am	0.6394
RE is fun	0.7795
RE helps me to lead a better life	0.6368
It is important to know what people of other faiths believe	0.6083
I enjoy debates in RE	0.6328

* These items are reverse scored.

Alpha = 0.9227

Attitude toward religious education: profile of the whole sample

Table 7.2 presents the proportions of the total number of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

Table 7.2 Attitude toward religious education: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
RE is usually interesting	31	25	45
RE is a waste of time	36	23	41
I enjoy learning about different religions	25	23	53
RE helps me to make sense of my life	14	23	64
RE is boring	50	20	31
RE wastes time I could spend on exam subjects	51	21	29
I enjoy discussing moral problems in RE	32	23	46
RE helps me to think about who I really am	14	22	64
RE is fun	19	23	58
RE helps me to lead a better life	6	21	73
It is important to know what people of other faiths believe	42	24	34
I enjoy debates in RE	44	22	35

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Table 7.2 indicates that a greater proportion of pupils have a negative attitude toward most aspects of RE than those with a positive attitude. Viewing RE in general terms, half the pupils find RE boring (50%), compared with 31% who do not find it boring and 20% who have no real feelings about the subject or who cannot decide. Considering the subject from a positive perspective, only 31% of the pupils find RE usually interesting, just under half (45%) do not find it interesting, and a quarter (25%) are undecided. Whereas the responses to items describing RE as 'interesting' or 'boring' correlate quite closely, this is not so when pupils are asked to consider whether RE is fun. Well over half do not find RE fun (58%), compared with less than a fifth (19%) who do. Again, roughly a quarter of the pupils (23%) express indifference or indecision, and this figure is representative of this category of responses throughout. When placed in the context of examination pressures, half the pupils (51%) consider that RE wastes time that could be spent on exam subjects, compared with 29% who disagree. Yet only a third of the pupils (36%) find RE altogether a waste of time, and two in five (41%) do not consider it so.

Regarding lesson content and teaching methods, only a quarter (25%) of the pupils enjoy learning about different religions, compared with just over half (53%) who do not. Yet two in five pupils (42%) consider it important to know what people of other faiths believe, compared with a third (34%) who do not think it important. This suggests that most pupils do not enjoy the detached, critical approach associated with 'learning about' religions (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority 1994). Since more pupils are interested in what people of other faiths believe, this suggests that an empathic and experiential approach might make a greater contribution to pupils' spiritual development. In response to an item relating directly to teaching method, over two in five pupils (44%) enjoy debates in RE, compared with a third (35%) who do not. This suggests that the method of discussion and debate, which involves a high level of pupil participation, is more popular than a 'learning about' approach, which might involve either a considerable amount of textbook study or a more didactic approach on the part of the teacher. Yet although 44% of pupils enjoy debates, a similar proportion of pupils (46%) do not enjoy discussing moral problems in RE. This suggests either that pupils prefer to avoid questions of morality altogether, or do not like to link questions of morality with religion.

Three items relate to government's call for religious education to encourage pupils to 'learn from' religion, suggesting a need for an affective rather than cognitive response. An overwhelming 73% of the pupils do not think that RE helps them to lead a better life, whether they understand 'better' in moral terms or as referring to quality of life. Two thirds of the pupils (64%) feel that RE offers them no help in thinking about who they really are, or in making sense of their lives. These findings suggest that for the majority of the pupils, religious education is not a popular subject and from most pupils' own perspectives, it makes no contribution to their spiritual or moral development.

Comparing school approaches

Attitude toward religious education: by school provision for the subject

Table 7.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward religious education and schools' provision for religious education. From the 1950s onwards research has suggested that 'unsuccessful' religious education could

be attributed to inadequate resourcing of the subject, particularly in terms of specialist staff and timetable allocations. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 7.3 compares the attitude toward religious education of the pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 7.3 Attitude toward religious education: by school provision for the subject

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	674	30.4	11.3
adequate	2318	31.3	11.7

F= 3.1, NS

Table 7.3 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitude toward religious education of pupils in schools where provision for the subject is minimalist, and those where the subject is adequately resourced in terms of timetable allocations and specialist staff.

In schools where provision for religious education is minimal it is the year ten pupils, who form the larger proportion of the research sample, who receive very little or no religious education. These pupils are likely to feel that the school considers religious education unimportant and may take that attitude for themselves. Table 7.2 shows that overall, the majority of pupils find religious education boring and resent having to spend time on the subject. Those pupils in schools where provision for religious education is adequate have had better provision throughout the school in terms of timetable allocations and specialist staff, yet their attitude toward religious education is no different from that of pupils in schools where provision is minimal. Table 7.3 shows that attitude toward religious education, whether positive or negative, cannot be attributed to whether or not a school provides adequate religious education for all its pupils. Attitude toward religious education must therefore be influenced by other factors. Later sections will examine other factors that may influence pupils' attitude toward religious education.

Attitude toward religious education: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 7.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward religious education and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet in subsequent debate (see Hull 1990, 1991b, for example) views were expressed that the principal religions represented in Britain should be taught in equal measure. A review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the teacher questionnaire suggested that in a number of schools Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7 schools participating in the pupil survey were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 7.4 compares the attitude toward religious education of the pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 7.4 Attitude toward religious education: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	1017	30.7	11.4
world religions	1975	31.3	11.7

F= 2.2, NS

Table 7.4 shows that there is no significant difference between the attitude toward religious education of pupils in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance, and pupils in schools where Christianity and other world religions are taught in equal measure. Table 7.2 shows that overall, the majority of pupils find religious education boring and resent having to spend time on the subject. Table 7.4 shows that attitude toward religious education, whether positive or negative, cannot be attributed to whether schools have focused on biblical material and the phenomena of Christianity, or on the phenomena of several world religions of which Christianity is one. Attitude toward religious education must therefore be influenced

by other factors. Later sections will examine other factors that may influence pupils' attitudes toward religious education.

Attitude toward religious education: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 7.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward religious education and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes such as 'festivals', or 'initiation rites' across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately, over a relatively long period of time, and in some depth – sometimes referred to as a 'systematic' approach. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. At the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act fears were expressed that a thematic approach would result in the religions being confused one with another, superficiality and a valueless relativism. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 7.5 compares the attitude toward religious education of the pupils in schools where the approach is thematic, pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately, and pupils in schools where the approach is 'mixed'.

Table 7.5 Attitude toward religious education: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	719	31.6	11.5
separate	1318	31.3	11.9
mixed	955	30.5	11.3

F= 2.2, NS

Table 7.5 shows that there is no significant difference in attitude toward religious education between pupils in schools where a topic relevant to more than one religion is taught across the religions, pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately, or pupils in schools where there is a 'mixed' approach, that is, where

sometimes themes are followed, sometimes the religions are taught separately. This suggests that the criticisms of an approach described as 'multifaith mishmash', understood by Hull (1991b) to refer to a thematic approach rather than to teaching a number of religions, are unfounded. Table 7.2 shows that over half the pupils (53%) do not enjoy learning about different religions, although 42% of the pupils consider it important to know what people of other faiths believe. This might suggest that the thematic study of religions, usually associated with a detached 'learning about' approach, might be a factor that causes negative attitudes toward religious education. However, table 7.5 shows that attitude toward religious education, whether positive or negative, cannot be attributed to whether religions are taught thematically, separately, or in a mixture of both approaches. Attitude toward religious education must therefore be influenced by other factors. Later sections will examine other factors that may influence pupils' attitudes toward religious education.

Attitude toward religious education: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 7.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward religious education and schools' general approaches to teaching religion. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of focusing on the 'external' phenomena of religions. The approach is objective, detached and critical. In other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches.

Table 7.6 Attitude toward religious education: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1723	32.2	11.7
experiential	586	29.7	11.8
mixed	683	29.6	10.8

F= 17.8, P< .001

Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 4 schools as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 7.6 compares the attitude toward religious education of the pupils in these three different categories of schools. This table suggests that a phenomenological approach will produce a more positive attitude toward religious education than an experiential approach, and a 'mixed' approach will produce a less positive attitude. This finding is surprising in view of the body of literature, much of it research-based, that has suggested that pupils will enjoy religious education more if it is related to their own personal experiences. Pupils' comments on the back page of the questionnaire reveal, however, that many object to personal questions, even though their anonymity is guaranteed. A possible explanation for a more negative attitude when the approach to religious education is experiential might be that most adolescents do not want their personal experiences discussed, neither do they want them to be linked with religion. It might also be the case that young people prefer a detached, critical and unemotional approach to studying religion.

School approaches and attitude toward religious education: summary

The data relating to school approaches to religious education show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their attitudes toward religious education whether schools have a minimalist or adequate approach, whether the teaching of Christianity is given predominance or religions are taught in equal measure, or whether religions are taught thematically or separately, or in a mixture of both methods. However, pupils in schools where the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, are likely to have a more positive attitude toward religious education than pupils in schools where the teaching approach seeks to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences. Where the approach is mixed, pupils are less likely to have a positive attitude toward religious education.

Since most approaches to religious education make no significant difference to pupils' attitudes toward the subject, other possible influences on attitude toward religious education are now considered.

Other influences

Sex differences and attitude toward religious education

Numerous research studies have shown that females have more positive attitudes toward most aspects of religion than males (see Greeley 1992, Kay and Francis 1996: 10), and girls consistently record more positive attitudes than boys to Christianity (see Kay and Francis 1996: 16-18). In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 7.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward religious education and the sex of the pupils.

Table 7.7 Attitude toward religious education: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1495	28.7	11.8
female	1493	33.5	11.0

F= 132.6, P< .001

Table 7.7 shows that the girls record a significantly more positive attitude toward religious education than do the boys (P< .001). Girls are therefore less likely than boys to find religious education boring or a waste of time. They are more likely to enjoy debates in religious education, and are more interested in knowing what people from other faiths believe. Since girls are more likely than boys to be interested in religious topics, they are more likely to learn from religion's responses to spiritual and moral issues. This suggests that religious education is likely to make a more significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of girls than boys.

Church attendance and attitude toward religious education

A number of research studies have shown that church attendance is a predictor of positive attitudes toward a wide range of religious beliefs and practices, and toward school in general (see Francis and Kay 1995). In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 7.8 examines the

relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward religious education and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 7.8 Attitude toward religious education: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1766	28.6	11.3
sometimes	1000	34.5	11.0
at least once a month	204	36.2	11.2

F= 112.2, P< .001

Table 7.8 suggests that church attendance is likely to relate to a positive attitude toward religious education. The data show that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are more likely to have a positive attitude toward religious education than those who sometimes attend (P< .001), and pupils who never attend are less likely to have a positive attitude. Teenage churchgoers are thus less likely than non-churchgoers to find religious education boring or a waste of time. They are, for example, more likely to enjoy debates in religious education, and are more likely to be interested in knowing what people from other faiths believe. It seems that their interest in religion, and in other religions, has been stimulated by their own experiences of a religious community.

Academic expectations and attitude toward religious education

A number of research studies (see Argyle 1958) have suggested that there is a negative relationship between intelligence and religiosity. Others have found no significant relationship between intelligence and religiosity, and still others have found a positive relationship (see Francis 1998a). The present research explores the relationship between intelligence, defined in terms of academic ability, and attitude toward religious education. In order to assess the academic ability of pupils participating in the survey and completing questionnaires, pupils were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. The lie scale included in the questionnaire shows that most pupils are telling the truth, and at this point in their school experience all pupils will have received numerous examination grades and assessments of their

work. Their responses can therefore be used as valid indicators of their academic ability. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve at best a number of D-G grades in the GCSE examinations, a very small percentage (2%) expecting no GCSE passes. A third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample (expecting only grades D-G or no passes) is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils (expecting grades A-C and in some cases, A or AS levels). Table 7.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward religious education and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 7.9 Attitude toward religious education: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G grades or less	444	29.4	12.2
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	974	30.9	11.2
5 or more GCSE A-C	830	31.2	11.7
1 to 2 A or AS level	659	32.4	11.4

$F = 6.0$, $P < .001$

Table 7.9 shows that the least academically able pupils are likely to have the least positive attitude toward religious education, and the most academically able pupils are likely to have the most positive attitude toward religious education ($P < .001$). These findings contrast with the findings of the research studies that indicate an inverse relationship between intelligence and attitude toward religion, and other studies that find no significant relationship between these two constructs. A possible explanation may be that few studies have involved adolescents, and the present study relates to religious education, a curriculum subject, rather than religion or religiosity.

Television viewing and attitude toward religious education

A number of research studies (see, for example, Fogelman 1976, Furnham and Gunter 1983) have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Further studies have identified negative correlations between high levels of television viewing and negative attitudes toward school (Hagborg 1995), and school learning (Gaddy 1986). Pupils participating in the present survey

were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. These findings support the view that watching television is a major leisure activity for most teenagers. Table 7.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward religious education and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on one particular day.

Table 7.10 Attitude toward religious education: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	461	32.1	12.7
1 to 4 hours	2021	31.5	11.2
over 4 hours	505	28.7	12.1

F= 14.1, P< .001

Table 7.10 shows that pupils who watched for over four hours are the least likely to have a positive attitude toward religious education, whilst pupils who watched for less than one hour are the most likely to have a positive attitude. An explanation for these findings may be that most television programmes present negative images of religion. On the one hand, the ever-present acts of violence between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland and the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for example, present religion as a major source of international discord. On the other hand, clerics and church members alike are frequently portrayed as dishonest, immoral, or as figures of fun. Pupils who watch many hours of television each day are therefore unlikely to have positive attitudes toward lessons that deal with religion.

Conclusion

In all cases except one, different approaches to religious education make no significant difference to pupils' attitudes toward religious education. The one

exception is where the approach to religious education is phenomenological rather than experiential. Pupils in schools where the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, are likely to have a more positive attitude toward religious education than pupils in schools where the teaching approach seeks to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences. Apart from this one teaching approach, the key factors that cause differences in attitude toward religious education are sex, church attendance, academic ability, and television viewing. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to have a positive attitude toward religious education, and those who attend church frequently, those who are the most academically able, and those who watch relatively little television are likely to have a more positive attitude. If religious education is to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, attention needs to be given to making the subject more attractive to teenage boys and to the less academically able pupils. It may also involve inviting the church, whether at local or national level, to play a more active role in religious education, and using television or video-tapes that present positive images of religion and members of faith communities.

Chapter eight

Attitude toward self

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Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward self. The National Curriculum Council (1993a) identifies self-knowledge as a major aspect of spiritual development and suggests that this can be partly understood in terms of the development of self-respect. The present research therefore uses a measure of self-esteem as a major component in assessing pupils' spiritual attitudes. This chapter first presents the scale that measures attitude toward self. Secondly, it provides a profile of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward self. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward self. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' attitudes toward self. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Attitude toward self: testing an attitude scale

The National Curriculum Council (1993a) stresses the importance of self-awareness as an aspect of spiritual development, linking self-understanding with the ability to understand others. Psychological theory concerned with self-concept suggests that self-evaluation is partly derived from the individual's view of how he or she is evaluated by others. The pupil questionnaire therefore uses as a measure of attitude toward self the short form of the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (Coopersmith 1981). This is an instrument that includes items designed to measure aspects of self-esteem relating to peers, parents and school, as well as personal feelings. Developed from a scale that originally contained 58 items, this is a 25 item instrument scored on a two point scale: 'yes' and 'no'. The responses indicate high or low self-esteem. These 25 items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 8.1. The internal reliability of the scale is supported by an alpha coefficient of 0.8238 (Cronbach 1951). The item rest of test correlation coefficients vary between 0.1113 and 0.5381.

Table 8.1 Attitude toward self: scale properties

item	r
I often wish I were someone else *	0.4782
I find it very hard to talk in front of the class *	0.2734
There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could*	0.4573
I can make up my mind without too much trouble	0.2943
I get easily upset at home*	0.4425
I'm a lot of fun to be with	0.2612
It takes me a long time to get used to anything new*	0.2725
I'm popular with kids my own age	0.3132
My parents usually consider my feelings	0.3390
I give in very easily *	0.2779
My parents expect too much of me *	0.3911
It's pretty tough to be me *	0.4293
Things are all mixed up in my life *	0.5381
Kids usually follow my ideas	0.1930
I have a low opinion of myself *	0.5181
There are many times when I'd like to leave home *	0.4218
I often feel upset in school *	0.4707
I'm not as nice looking as most people *	0.3571
If I have something to say I usually say it	0.2895
My parents understand me	0.4146
Most people are better liked than I am *	0.4801
I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me *	0.3650
I often get discouraged in school *	0.4179
Things usually don't bother me	0.1706
I can't be depended on *	0.1113

* These items are reverse scored.

Alpha = 0.8238

Attitude toward self: profile of the whole sample

Table 8.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement or disagreement with each of the individual items.

Table 8.2 Attitude toward self: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	No %
I often wish I were someone else	53	47
I find it very hard to talk in front of the class	55	45
There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could	67	33
I can make up my mind without too much trouble	70	31
I get easily upset at home	38	62
I'm a lot of fun to be with	85	15
It takes me a long time to get used to anything new	28	72
I'm popular with kids my own age	75	25
My parents usually consider my feelings	69	31
I give in very easily	33	68
My parents expect too much of me	38	62
It's pretty tough to be me	54	46
Things are all mixed up in my life	41	59
Kids usually follow my ideas	46	54
I have a low opinion of myself	44	56
There are many times when I'd like to leave home	49	51
I often feel upset in school	30	70
I'm not as nice looking as most people	55	45
If I have something to say I usually say it	75	25
My parents understand me	65	35
Most people are better liked than I am	51	50
I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me	36	64
I often get discouraged in school	33	67
Things usually don't bother me	52	48
I can't be depended on	34	66

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Over half the pupils express high self-esteem in response to 18 of the 25 items (76%). The questions that draw the largest numbers of high esteem responses are 'I'm a lot of fun to be with' (85%), 'I'm popular with kids my own age' (75%), and 'If I have something to say I usually say it' (75%). The items that attract the largest numbers of low esteem responses are 'There are lots of things about me I'd change if I could' (67%), 'I'm not as nice looking as most people' (55%), 'I find it very hard to talk in front of the class' (55%), and 'Kids usually follow my ideas' (negative response, 54%).

Six items are concerned with pupils' home/parent relationships. On five of these items the majority of pupils make a positive rather than a negative response. Over two-thirds of the pupils (69%) feel that their parents usually consider their feelings, whilst just under a third (31%) think differently. Two-thirds of the pupils (65%) feel that their parents understand them, compared with a third (35%) who do not feel this. Two-thirds (64%) do not usually feel that their parents are pushing them compared with a third (36%) that do. Almost two-thirds (62%) of the pupils do not get easily upset at home, nor do they think that their parents expect too much of them, compared with just over a third (38%) who think differently. However, the sample is equally divided in response to the statement 'There are many times when I'd like to leave home'. These statistics show that although the majority of pupils feel that parents are generally supportive and sympathetic, half the pupils would prefer not to have to live at home. This suggests that whilst most 13-15 year-olds have good relationships with their parents and value parental support, their increasing sense of autonomy and independence leads to a desire for freedom from parental control.

Three items relate to school situations. Just over half the pupils (55%) find it hard to talk in front of the class, which contrasts sharply with the fact that 76% of the pupils state that if they have something to say they usually say it. Otherwise, responses to school are overwhelmingly positive. Over two thirds of the pupils (68%) do not often get discouraged in school and almost three-quarters (71%) do not often feel upset in school. The data suggest that for the large majority, school provides a supportive and sympathetic environment.

Overall, the majority of the pupils record high self-esteem for the majority (18) of the items, and for almost half of the questions at least two-thirds of the pupils express high self-esteem. Since self-esteem is to be considered a measure of spiritual development (National Curriculum Council 1993a), responses to the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory suggest that the majority of the pupils have reached a high level of maturity in this aspect of their spiritual development.

Comparing school approaches

Attitude toward self: by school provision for religious education

Table 8.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward self and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 7.3 compares the self-esteem of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 8.3 Attitude toward self: by school provision for religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	683	14.6	5.4
adequate	2377	15.1	5.3

$F= 5.0, P< .05$

Table 8.3 shows that pupils in schools where provision for religious education is adequate are more likely to have positive self-esteem than those in schools where provision is minimal. Table 8.2 shows that between two-thirds and three-quarters of the pupils are generally self-confident and have a positive attitude toward themselves. Similar numbers feel confident and positive about themselves in most school situations, and around two-thirds of the pupils are happy in their relationships with their parents. Table 8.3 suggests that for the large majority of pupils, the schools that make adequate provision for religious education are likely to make a greater contribution to pupils' self-esteem than those that provide their older pupils with little religious education. This suggests that religious education may make some contribution to this aspect of pupils' spiritual development, and that therefore

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schools should take care to provide adequate religious education for all their pupils. The following sections will seek to discover the kind of religious education that is likely to contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

Attitude toward self: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 8.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward self and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools in Cornwall Christianity was not given priority. In all, 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach, an important criterion being study of the Bible as a major resource, and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 8.4 compares the self-esteem of pupils in schools that teach mainly Christianity, and pupils in schools that teach the religions in equal measure.

Table 8.4 Attitude toward self: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	1025	15.4	5.3
world religions	2035	14.9	5.3

F= 6.2, P< .01

Table 8.4 shows that pupils in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance are likely to have higher self-esteem than pupils in schools where Christianity and other world religions are taught in equal measure. This suggests that where schools have focused on Christianity and biblical material, pupils are likely to have higher self-esteem and therefore, with reference to the scale of attitude toward self, are likely to have good relationships with peers, parents and school. A possible reason for this is that in presenting Jesus' life, actions and teachings, the New Testament stresses God's love and care for the individual. Pupils appear to benefit from this approach. In schools where the emphasis has been on treating all religions equally, pupils' self-esteem is likely to be less positive. This suggests that an

emphasis on teaching Christianity and the Bible is more likely to contribute to the self-esteem aspect of pupils' spiritual development than an approach that treats all religions equally.

Attitude toward self: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 8.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward self and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately, usually referred to as a 'systematic' approach. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. At the time of the 1988 Education Reform Act and subsequently, fears were expressed that a thematic approach would fail to give a true picture of the real meaning of each religion. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 8.5 compares the attitude toward self of the pupils in schools where the approach is thematic, pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately, and pupils in schools where the approach is 'mixed'.

Table 8.5 Attitude toward self: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	724	14.5	5.3
separate	1367	15.2	5.3
mixed	969	15.2	5.3

$F = 4.4$, $P < .05$

Table 8.5 shows that in schools where the religions are taught independently of each other, or where there is a mixture of a thematic or 'separate' approach, pupils are likely to have more positive self-images than pupils in schools where the religions are taught thematically. This suggests that when pupils study a religion on its own terms and for its own sake, they are likely to develop a more positive self-image than when they study individual topics across a number of religions. Equally, in schools

where sometimes themes are followed, sometimes the religions are taught separately, pupils are likely to develop a more positive self-image. Whether a systematic approach is followed throughout religious education or not, it seems that attention to a religion in its own right may lead to a deeper understanding of what a religion means to a believer, for example, and this in turn may lead pupils to a greater appreciation of their own self-worth.

Attitude toward self: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 8.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward self and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 8.6 compares the self-esteem of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 8.6 Attitude toward self: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1781	15.0	5.4
experiential	593	14.9	5.4
mixed	686	15.2	5.2

F= 0.3, NS

Table 8.6 suggests that there is no significant difference in pupils' attitudes toward self, whether the approach to teaching is phenomenological, experiential, or a mixture of both. This finding is surprising, since it would seem that an approach that focuses on pupils' own experiences and interests would be more likely to influence self-understanding and a positive self-concept than an approach that is objective and detached. Table 8.2 shows that the majority of the pupils record high self-esteem for

the majority of the items. Table 8.6 shows that this is not attributable to either a phenomenological or experiential approach to religious education.

School approaches and attitude toward self: summary

The data relating to school approaches and attitude toward self show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their attitude toward self whether schools have a teaching approach that is phenomenological, experiential, or a mixture of both. However, pupils in schools where provision for religious education is adequate are likely to have higher self-esteem than those in schools where the approach is minimalist. Pupils in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance are likely to have higher self-esteem than pupils in schools where religions are taught in equal measure. Finally, pupils in schools where religions are taught separately or in a mixture of both methods are likely to have higher high self-esteem than those in schools where religions are taught thematically. These findings suggest that in order to promote this aspect of pupils' spiritual development schools need to make adequate provision for religious education, particularly for older pupils where provision is weakest. Schools also need to ensure that Christianity is taught 'in the main', and that religions are taught separately, at least for part of the school curriculum.

Since religious education is unlikely to be the only influence on pupils' attitudes toward self, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and attitude toward self

A number of research studies that have used the short form of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, for example, Smith et al. (1973), Prawat (1976), Gill and Thornton (1989), have failed to find any significant difference between the scores of boys and girls. Other studies, for example, Watkins (1982), Robinson-Arwana, Kehle and Jenson (1986), Francis (1998b), have found that boys record significantly higher scores than girls. In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 8.7 examines the

relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward self and the sex of the pupils.

Table 8.7 Attitude toward self: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1531	16.1	5.1
female	1525	14.0	5.3

F= 121.6, P< .001

Table 8.7 shows that the boys record a significantly more positive self-attitude than do the girls (P< .001). This finding supports the findings of Watkins (1982), Robinson-Arwana, Kehle and Jenson (1986) and Francis (1998b), and contradicts other studies using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (see above) that have found no significant difference between the scores of male and female school pupils. Reasons for the present data may be found in feminist literature that presents society as patriarchal and oppressive toward women. Alternatively, Francis (1998b) argues that gender bias in the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory accounts for the finding that boys record higher self-esteem than girls. If, however, the findings of the present study are correct, teachers need to pay particular attention to promoting the self-esteem of their female pupils if they wish to contribute to this aspect of their spiritual development.

Church attendance and attitude toward self

Research studies that have looked for a relationship between religion and self-esteem have revealed no consistent pattern in their findings, mainly because of the variety of measures of self-concept used, the range of the indicators of religiosity, and the diversity of the samples. Few have examined the relationship between attitude toward self and church attendance, and of those that have, church attendance may be one item among many chosen to indicate particular aspects of religiosity. Of these, Bahr and Martin (1983) found no significant correlation between self-esteem and church attendance in a sample of 471 high school pupils. In contrast, Strunk (1958) found in a sample of 136 high school students a positive relationship between religiosity and self-concept, church attendance being just one of the items used to measure religiosity. In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never

attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 8.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward self and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 8.8 Attitude toward self: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1813	15.1	5.2
sometimes	1019	14.8	5.5
at least once a month	206	15.1	5.6

$F= 1.0$, NS

Table 8.8 shows that church attendance is not a factor that influences pupils' attitude toward self. The majority of the pupils in the present sample indicate positive attitudes toward self in response to the majority of items. However, the data presented in table 8.8 suggest that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are no more likely to have high self-esteem than pupils who sometimes or never attend.

Academic expectations and attitude toward self

The present research explores the relationship between intelligence, defined in terms of academic ability, and attitude toward self. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve at best a number of D-G grades, a third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils. Table 8.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward self and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 8.9 Attitude toward self: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	464	13.5	5.1
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	992	14.7	5.2
5 or more GCSE A-C	847	15.6	5.3
1 to 2 A or AS level	666	16.0	5.3

$F = 26.0$, $P < .001$

Table 8.9 shows that the least academically able pupils are likely to have the lowest self-esteem, and the most academically able pupils are likely to have the highest self-esteem ($P < .001$). Research has suggested that self-esteem is frequently related to academic motivation and achievement (see, for example, Simon and Simon 1975, Prawat et al. 1979, Keltikangas-Järvinen 1992). The data in table 8.9 support these findings, and suggest that improvements in most aspects of pupils' learning will contribute to the self-esteem aspect of pupils' spiritual development. This suggests that by improving standards in examination-related subjects, spiritual development can be promoted across the whole curriculum, as requested by the National Curriculum Council (1993a) and OFSTED (1994).

Television viewing and attitude toward self

A number of research studies (see, for example, Fogelman 1976, Furnham and Gunter 1983) have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. In order to assess the influence of television on pupils' attitudes toward a range of subjects, pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. These findings support the view that watching television is a major leisure activity for most teenagers. Table 8.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward self and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on one particular day.

Table 8.10 Attitude toward self: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	479	15.3	5.5
3 to 4 hours	2061	15.2	5.2
over 4 hours	514	14.1	5.4

F= 9.0, P< .001

Table 8.10 shows that pupils who watched television for less than one hour are likely to have the most positive attitude toward self, whilst pupils who watched for over four hours are likely to have the least positive attitude. One explanation of these data may relate to other data derived from the pupil questionnaire that show that the most frequently watched programmes are television 'soaps'. These are watched at least once a week by three-quarters (75%) of the pupils. Further research would be needed to determine how the content of these programmes might lead to young people's low self-esteem. A different explanation may lie in the possibility pupils who watch many hours of television each day take little or no part in recreational or social activities that might help to promote high self-esteem. This suggests that schools that encourage extra-curricular activities, in the form of educational trips to places of interest, school exchanges, and inter-school sports events and interest-related clubs, might make a valuable contribution to the self-esteem aspect of pupils' spiritual development.

Conclusion

In all cases except one, that of either a phenomenological or an experiential approach, different approaches to religious education make a significant difference to pupils' attitudes toward self. Pupils in schools where provision for religious education is adequate are likely to have higher self-esteem than those in schools where the approach is minimalist. Pupils in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance are likely to have higher self-esteem than pupils in schools where religions are taught in equal measure. Pupils in schools where religions are taught separately or in a mixture of both methods are likely to have higher self-esteem than those in schools where religions are taught thematically. These findings suggest that if schools wish to raise pupils' self esteem and thus promote this aspect of pupils' spiritual development they need to make adequate

provision for religious education, particularly for older pupils where provision is weakest. These findings also suggest that schools that teach Christianity 'in the main', with a focus on biblical and particularly New Testament material, and schools that teach religions separately, at least for part of the school curriculum, are the most likely to raise pupils' self-esteem.

In addition to these teaching approaches that are likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in attitude toward self are sex, academic ability, and television viewing. Teenage boys are more likely than girls to have a positive self-image, together with those who are the most academically able and those who watch relatively little television. If pupils' spiritual and (according to OFSTED 1994) moral development is to be judged in terms of self-esteem, schools need to give attention to promoting the self-esteem of their teenage girls, and the less academically able pupils. Schools might also consider making greater use of television and video-tapes that provide positive self-images of young people, and of encouraging all pupils to take part in both time-tabled and extra-curricular activities that will encourage high self-esteem.

Chapter nine

Attitude toward secular spiritual experience

Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward secular spiritual experience. The National Curriculum Council (1993a), emphasising the need to offer all pupils the opportunities for a spiritual development unrelated to religion, proposes the following forms of spiritual experience as marks of spiritual development: experiencing transcendence, having a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world, expressing creative talents, being inspired through the arts, and valuing self and others. This chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale to measure pupils' attitudes toward secular spiritual experience. Secondly, it provides a profile of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward this aspect of spiritual development. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward secular spiritual experience. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' attitudes toward secular spiritual experience. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: developing an attitude scale

In the present research attitude toward secular spiritual experience is measured by ten statements that relate closely to those suggested by the National Curriculum Council. Each begins with the stem 'I have felt close to some power beyond myself when I have ...' Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. The ten items were found to cohere to produce a homogeneous and unidimensional scale measuring attitude toward secular spiritual experience. These ten items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 9.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.9248 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 9.1 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: scale properties

item	r
I have felt close to some power beyond myself when I have	
been out walking alone	0.6773
watched a beautiful sunset	0.7677
looked up at the stars on a clear night	0.7438
sat on a moonlit beach	0.7449
listened to my favourite piece of music	0.7243
produced a good painting/sculpture/tapestry, etc.	0.6594
enjoyed my favourite hobby	0.7188
done well at my favourite sport	0.6666
looked at a tiny baby	0.7014
helped someone in need	0.7141

Alpha = 0.9248

Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: profile of the whole sample

Table 9.2 presents the proportions of the total number of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

With the exception of one item, less than a third of the pupils respond positively to the items selected to measure a non-religious form of spiritual development. Just over a third (38%) of the pupils 'have felt close to some power beyond myself' when looking up at the stars on a clear night. Items attracting the next highest proportions of positive responses relate to helping someone in need (32%), looking at a tiny baby (30%), and listening to a favourite piece of music' (30%).

Table 9.2 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
I have felt close to some power beyond myself when I have			
been out walking alone			
watched a beautiful sunset	24	25	51
looked up at the stars on a clear night	27	24	50
sat on a moonlit beach	38	22	41
listened to my favourite piece of music	23	27	50
produced a good painting/sculpture/tapestry, etc.	30	22	48
enjoyed my favourite hobby	15	23	62
done well at my favourite sport	26	23	51
looked at a tiny baby	26	23	51
helped someone in need	30	26	45
	32	27	41

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Around a quarter (22%-27%) of the pupils express uncertainty throughout. The item attracting the highest proportion of negative responses (62%) to the statement 'I have felt close to some power beyond myself when I have...' is 'produced a good painting/sculpture/tapestry, etc.'. Over half the pupils (51%) do not experience a power beyond themselves either when enjoying their favourite hobby or doing well at their favourite sport. Clearly most pupils do not associate their own creative abilities with a sense of a power beyond themselves. For approximately half the pupils the signs of the development of a non-religious spirituality suggested by the National Curriculum Council (1993a) are not present.

Comparing school approaches

Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by school provision for the subject

Table 9.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward secular spiritual experience and schools' provision for religious education.

Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified five schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 9.3 compares the attitude toward secular spiritual experience of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 9.3 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by school provision for religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	651	27.1	10.5
adequate	2205	26.1	10.2

$F= 4.5$, $P< .05$

Table 9.3 shows that in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist, pupils are likely to have a more positive attitude toward secular spiritual experience than those in schools where provision is adequate. In schools where the approach to religious education is minimalist, provision for religious education, particularly in year ten may be very little or non-existent. Pupils in these schools are likely to respond more positively to those measures of secular spiritual development suggested by the National Curriculum Council (1993a). Pupils in schools with a minimalist approach to religious education are more likely to have a sense of awe and wonder, be inspired by the natural world or human achievement, or by their own creativity, than pupils in schools where provision for religious education is adequate. Since the teacher questionnaire indicated that where religious education was given little curriculum time in year ten it was included in general humanities courses, for example, it might be that these courses might be more successful than religious education in promoting secular spiritual development.

Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 9.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward secular spiritual experience and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that

Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the Cornwall teachers' questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 9.4 compares the attitude toward secular spiritual experience of pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 9.4 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	993	26.1	10.2
world religions	1863	26.4	10.3

F= 0.6, NS

Table 9.4 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitude toward secular spiritual experience of pupils in schools that teach mainly Christianity compared with schools that teach a number of religions in equal measure. This suggests that whether schools teach mainly Christianity or give equal weight to a number of religions, neither are factors that contribute to the development of a spirituality that is understood in terms of pupils' sensitivity to the beauties of the natural world, for example, or appreciation of human achievement.

Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 9.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward secular spiritual experience and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately, usually referred to as a 'systematic' approach. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a

'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 9.5 compares the attitude toward secular spiritual experience of the pupils in schools where the approach is thematic, pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately, and pupils in schools where the approach is 'mixed'.

Table 9.5 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	709	26.6	10.4
separate	1219	26.3	10.2
mixed	928	26.2	10.4

F= 0.3, NS

Table 9.5 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitude toward secular spiritual experience of pupils in schools where the religions are taught thematically, independently of each other, or where there is a mixture of a thematic or 'separate' approach. This suggests that whether pupils study a religion on its own terms and for its own sake, or whether they study individual topics across a number of religions, neither are factors that contribute to the development of a spirituality that is understood in terms of pupils' sensitivity to the beauties of the natural world, for example, or appreciation of human achievement.

Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 9.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward secular spiritual experience and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both

approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 9.6 compares the attitudes toward secular spiritual experience of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 9.6 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1610	26.6	10.2
experiential	568	26.0	11.0
mixed	678	26.0	10.0

F= 1.5, NS

Table 9.6 suggests that there is no significant difference in pupils' attitudes toward secular spiritual experience, whether the approach to teaching is phenomenological, experiential, or a mixture of both. This finding is surprising, since an approach that focuses on pupils' own experiences and interests might be expected to result in more positive attitudes toward the kinds of spiritual experience described by the National Curriculum Council's (1993a) discussion paper, than an approach that is generally objective and detached. The data shown in table 9.6 do not support this theory.

School approaches and attitude toward secular spiritual experience: summary

The data relating to school approaches and attitude toward secular spiritual experience show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their attitudes toward secular spiritual experience, whether schools teach 'Christianity in the main' or have a 'world religions' approach, or whether they teach religions separately or thematically, phenomenologically or experientially. However, pupils in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist are more likely to have positive attitudes toward the kind of spiritual experience that is unrelated to religion than those in schools where provision for religious education is adequate. These findings suggest that whereas the incorporation of religious education in Personal, Social and Moral Education or general humanities courses may succeed in promoting a non-

religious spirituality, religious education needs to learn how to contribute to this aspect of pupils' spiritual development.

Since the preceding data suggest that religious education has had little influence on pupils' attitudes toward secular spiritual experience, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and attitude toward secular spiritual experience

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 9.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward secular spiritual experience and the sex of the pupils.

Table 9.7 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1413	24.5	10.7
female	1438	28.1	9.6

F= 86.9, P< .001

Table 9.7 shows that the girls in the sample record a significantly more positive attitude toward secular spiritual experience than do the boys (P< .001). Numerous research studies (see, for example, Hay 1990: 56) have shown that women are more likely than men to record having had some sort of spiritual experience, which they may have described in religious or non-religious terms. Table 9.7 suggests that young people are likely to fit into this trend, since the girls record more positive attitudes than the boys toward the kind of spiritual experience that can take place in a secular context.

Church attendance and attitude toward secular spiritual experience

In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month

Table 9.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward secular spiritual experience and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 9.8 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1674	24.7	10.4
sometimes	965	28.0	9.1
at least once a month	196	31.8	11.4

F= 63.6, P< .001

Table 9.8 suggests that frequent churchgoing is likely to relate closely to a positive attitude toward secular spiritual experience. The data show that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are likely to have a more positive attitude toward secular spiritual experience than those who sometimes attend (P< .001), and pupils who never attend are likely to have a less positive attitude. Teenage churchgoers are thus more likely than non-churchgoers to be aware of a spiritual element, a power beyond themselves, experienced in the beauty of the natural world, in their own creativity, and in human relationships.

Academic expectations and a*ttitude toward secular spiritual experience*

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and attitude toward secular spiritual experience. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve only D-G grades in the GCSE examinations, or less. A third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A to C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils. Table 9.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward secular spiritual experience and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 9.9 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	414	26.2	11.0
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	934	26.9	10.0
5 or more GCSE A-C	786	25.9	9.9
1 to 2 A or AS level	642	25.8	10.6

F= 2.1, NS

Table 9.9 shows that intelligence is not a factor that influences secular spiritual experience. Those who are the most academically able are no more likely to have a positive attitude toward secular spiritual experience than the least academically able. A possible explanation may be that intelligence is defined here in terms that relate primarily to cognitive development, whereas spiritual experience, whether related to religion or otherwise, relates primarily to the emotions.

Television viewing and attitude toward secular spiritual experience

As noted earlier, research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 9.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward secular spiritual experience and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on one particular day.

Table 9.10 Attitude toward secular spiritual experience: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	436	26.9	11.3
3 to 4 hours	1929	26.4	9.9
over 4 hours	486	25.5	10.8

F= 2.3, NS

Table 9.10 shows that television viewing has no significant influence on pupils' attitudes toward secular spiritual experience. On the one hand, pupils who spend the majority of their leisure time watching television are unlikely to place themselves in situations where they might have some of the experiences suggested by the National Curriculum Council (1993a) as indicators of secular spiritual development. They are unlikely to be inspired directly by the natural world, or to develop self-respect or artistic creativity, or to value human relationships in which they are personally involved. On the other hand, pupils who watch little television are unlikely to be influenced by television in any respect.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and attitude toward secular spiritual experience show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their attitudes toward secular spiritual experience, whether schools teach 'Christianity in the main' or have a 'world religions' approach, or whether they teach religions separately or thematically, phenomenologically or experientially. However, pupils in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist are likely to have a more positive attitude toward the kind of spiritual experience that is unrelated to religion than those in schools where provision for religious education is adequate. This findings might suggest that whereas the incorporation of religious education in Personal, Social and Moral Education or general humanities courses may succeed in promoting a non-religious spirituality, religious education needs to learn how to contribute more effectively to this aspect of pupils' spiritual development.

Other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in attitude toward secular spiritual experience are sex, and church attendance. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to have positive attitudes toward secular spiritual experience, together with those who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month. If schools are to seek to promote this aspect of pupils' spiritual development, teachers of religious education need to focus on teaching approaches that encourage boys to appreciate the beauty of the natural world, for example, and perhaps encourage the development of the emotional aspects of their personality.

Chapter ten

Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience

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Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward Christian spiritual experience. Circular 1/94 stressed that religious education was to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual development (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4), and that at each key stage the content relating to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35). Pupils' responses to statements relating to Christian spiritual experience are therefore used as measures of pupils' spiritual development. This chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale to measure pupils' attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience. Secondly, it provides a profile of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward this aspect of spiritual development. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward Christian spiritual experience. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: developing an attitude scale

In the present research attitude toward Christian spiritual experience is measured by eight statements that were chosen by a random sample of a dozen teenagers who regularly attended either an Anglican, Baptist or Methodist church. Most of the chosen items relate to experience in a church context, such as attending a funeral, or listening to church music. Two relate to personal prayer. Each item begins with the stem 'I have felt close to some power beyond myself when I have ...' Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. The eight items were found to cohere to produce a homogeneous and unidimensional scale measuring attitude toward Christian spiritual experience. These eight items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are

presented in table 10.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.9134 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 10.1 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: scale properties

item	r
I have felt close to some power beyond myself when I have	
visited a beautiful church or cathedral	0.7425
listened to church music	0.7924
sung a favourite hymn or chorus in church	0.7865
received communion	0.7872
been to a wedding	0.6550
been to a funeral	0.5848
cried to God to help me in times of trouble	0.7102
prayed with a friend about a problem	0.7337
Alpha = 0.9134	

Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: profile of the whole sample

Table 10.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

In examining these data account needs to be taken of the fact that elsewhere in the questionnaire 84% of the pupils, when asked about frequency of attending a place of worship, state that they attend once or twice a year or never, 9% sometimes, and only 7% at least once a month. This offers some explanation for the very low percentages of pupils who have sensed a 'power beyond themselves' when singing a favourite hymn or chorus in church (9%), when receiving communion (8%), and when listening to church music (8%). Clearly, most pupils have not been in the church situations suggested as a context for experiencing a 'power beyond themselves'

Table 10.2 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
I have felt close to some power beyond myself when I have			
visited a beautiful church or cathedral	15	26	59
listened to church music	8	24	68
sung a favourite hymn or chorus in church	9	22	69
received communion	8	24	68
been to a wedding	22	27	51
been to a funeral	23	27	50
cried to God to help me in times of trouble	17	23	60
prayed with a friend about a problem	8	23	69

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Whilst data from elsewhere in the questionnaire show that only 7% of the pupils claim, in the context of frequency of churchgoing, to attend a place of worship at least once a month, those data also show that more pupils visit church buildings on an incidental basis. In response to earlier questions relating to attendance at special Christian services, 22% of the pupils record that they have attended a funeral in the last year. The data in table 10.2 demonstrate that as many as 23% have felt close to a 'power beyond themselves' when attending a funeral. This suggests that a funeral has a lasting spiritual impact. Similarly, 31% of the pupils record elsewhere that they have attended a wedding in the last year, and the data in table 10.2 demonstrate that 22% have experienced a feeling of closeness to a power beyond themselves when attending a wedding. Additionally, 15% of the pupils report feeling close to a power beyond themselves when they have visited a beautiful church or cathedral.

The data presented in table 10.2 suggest that attendance at a wedding or a funeral, or a visit to a beautiful church or cathedral might provide the opportunity for pupils to become aware of a spiritual presence. a power beyond their everyday experiences.

Two further items deal with personal prayer. Drawing on data provided by an earlier part of the questionnaire, whilst just 28% of pupils pray alone occasionally, and only 9% at least once a week, 53% pray in times of special need. The activity of praying suggests belief in God, and belief in a God who is able to respond to an individual's needs. Yet only 17% of the pupils feel close to God when they cry to him for help, and even fewer (8%) when they pray with a friend about a problem. From a negative perspective, around two-thirds of the pupils do not sense that there is a 'power beyond themselves' that will respond to calls for help, whether for themselves (60%), or for others (69%). For the majority of pupils, the practice of prayer is unlikely to contribute positively to their spiritual development.

Comparing school approaches

Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by school provision for religious education

Table 10.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christian spiritual experience and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 10.3 compares the attitude toward Christian spiritual experience of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 10.3 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by school approach to religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	651	18.8	9.0
adequate	2205	18.0	8.2

$F = 4.9$, $P < .05$

Table 10.3 shows that pupils in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist are likely to have a more positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience than pupils in schools where provision is adequate. Since the measures of Christian spirituality relate to the influence of church and private prayer, the data

might suggest that a lack of school religious education encourages in pupils an interest in or openness to spiritual experience elsewhere. Thus, when opportunities arise, such as attendance at weddings or funerals, pupils are open to experiencing a spirituality that is expressed in the context of the life of a faith community.

Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 10.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christian spiritual experience and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the teacher questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools in Cornwall Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 10.4 compares the attitude toward Christian spiritual experience of pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 10.4 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	993	17.8	8.4
world religions	1863	18.4	8.4

F= 3.4, NS

Table 10.4 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience of pupils in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance and pupils in schools where a number of religions are taught in equal measure. Since pupils' responses in earlier sections of the questionnaire show that most pupils recall being taught about the major events in Jesus' life, teachings and miracles, it is perhaps surprising that the schools with a focus in these

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areas have no more positive impact on pupils' responses to measures of Christian spiritual experience than schools that teach all religions equally. This suggests that Christianity is not taught in a way that helps pupils to sense the presence of God when they attend church services, for example, or engage in prayer.

Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 10.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christian spiritual experience and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately, usually referred to as a 'systematic' approach. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 10.5 compares the attitude toward Christian spiritual experience of the pupils in schools where the approach is thematic, pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately, and pupils in schools where the approach is 'mixed'.

Table 10.5 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	709	18.2	7.9
separate	1219	18.0	8.3
mixed	928	18.3	8.9

F= 0.5, NS

Table 10.5 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience of pupils in schools where the religions are taught thematically, independently of each other, or where there is a mixture of a thematic or 'separate' approach. This suggests that whether pupils study a religion on its own

terms and for its own sake, or whether they study individual topics across a number of religions, there is no measurable difference in their attitude toward Christian spiritual experience.

Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 10.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christian spiritual experience and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 10.6 compares the attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 10.6 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1610	18.4	8.3
experiential	568	18.3	9.6
mixed	678	17.4	7.5

F= 4.0, P< .05

Table 10.6 suggests that pupils in the schools that focus on the 'external' phenomena of religions are likely to have a more positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience than those in schools that seek to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences. Pupils in schools where there is a mixture of both approaches are likely to have a less positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience. These findings are surprising, since it would seem that an approach that

focuses most strongly on linking pupils' own experiences with the experiences of members of faith communities would be most likely to encourage a positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience.

School approaches and attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: summary

The data relating to school approaches and attitude toward Christian spiritual experience show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience, whether schools teach 'Christianity in the main' or have a 'world religions' approach, or whether they teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist are likely to have more positive attitudes toward spiritual experience that takes place in a Christian context than pupils in schools where provision for religious education is adequate. These findings suggest that the incorporation of religious education in Personal, Social and Moral Education, for example, or general humanities courses, may encourage pupils to seek spiritual experiences in a religious, and this case Christian, context. Surprisingly, pupils in the schools that focus on the 'external' phenomena of religions are likely to have a more positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience than those in schools that seek to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences. It seems that an approach that focuses upon linking pupils' own experiences with the experiences of members of faith communities is not the most likely to encourage a positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience.

Since the preceding data suggest that a minimalist approach to religious education is likely to result in more positive attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and attitude toward Christian spiritual experience

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 10.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christian spiritual experience and the sex of the pupils.

Table 10.7 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1413	16.8	8.4
female	1438	19.5	8.2

$F= 73.9$, $P< .001$

Table 10.7 shows that the girls in the sample record a significantly more positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience than the boys ($P< .001$). As noted earlier, research has shown that females have more positive attitudes than males toward most aspects of religion, and girls consistently record more positive attitudes than boys to most aspects of religious belief, behaviour and experience. The data presented in table 10.7 support these findings.

Church attendance and attitude toward Christian spiritual experience

A number of research studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between church attendance and religious beliefs (see Francis and Kay 1995: 141-144). The present research examines the relationship between church attendance and spiritual experience that may take place in a church context. In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 10.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christian spiritual experience and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 10.8 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1674	16.3	7.9
sometimes	965	20.1	8.0
at least once a month	196	24.0	9.7

$F= 122.7$, $P< .001$

Table 10.8 shows that frequent churchgoing is likely to relate closely to a positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience. The data show that pupils who attend

church or other place of worship at least once a month are likely to have a more positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience than those who sometimes attend (P< .001), and pupils who never attend are likely to have a less positive attitude.

The data demonstrate that teenagers who attend church frequently are more likely than non-churchgoing teenagers to feel close to God in a church service or building. Churchgoing teenagers are likely to identify a 'power beyond themselves' as the God of the Christian faith, and may therefore see God as a loving Father, who might be expected to answer their prayers, and with whom they might feel a close relationship. The data suggest that churches are making a significant contribution to the spiritual development of the small percentage of pupils who frequently attend.

Academic expectations and *attitude toward Christian spiritual experience*

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and attitude toward Christian spiritual experience. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve D-G grades or less, a third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils. Table 10.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christian spiritual experience and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 10.9 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	414	18.3	9.4
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	934	18.2	8.2
5 or more GCSE A-C	786	17.8	8.0
1 to 2 A or AS level	642	18.2	8.5

F= 0.5, NS

Table 10.9 shows that intelligence is not a factor that influences attitude toward Christian spiritual experience. Those who are the most academically able are no more likely to have a positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience than the least academically able. A possible explanation may be that intelligence is defined here in terms that relate primarily to cognitive development, whereas spiritual experience, whether related to religion or not, relates primarily to the emotions.

Television viewing and attitude toward Christian spiritual experience

As noted earlier, a number of research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 10.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christian spiritual experience and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on the specified day.

Table 10.10 Attitude toward Christian spiritual experience: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	436	18.4	8.5
3 to 4 hours	1929	18.3	8.4
over 4 hours	486	17.5	8.4

F= 1.7, NS

Table 10.10 shows that television viewing has no significant influence on pupils' attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience. On the one hand, pupils who spend the majority of their leisure time watching television are unlikely to spend time in church, and so are unlikely to have the opportunity to feel close to God in a church service, for example. On the other hand, pupils who watch little television are unlikely to be influenced by television in any respect.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and attitude toward secular spiritual experience show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience, whether schools teach 'Christianity in the main' or have a 'world religions' approach, or whether they teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist are more likely to have positive attitudes toward spiritual experience that is inspired by being in a church building, or by engaging in prayer, than those in schools where provision for religious education is adequate. These findings suggest that poor provision for religious education, in year ten often due to the incorporation of the subject in Personal, Social and Moral Education or general humanities courses, may encourage pupils to seek spiritual experience outside school, and in a church context. It seems that there is a need for adequate religious education, of the kind that will enable pupils to sense something of what it means for believers to receive communion, for example, or pray with a friend about a problem.

In addition to these teaching approaches that are likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in attitude toward Christian spiritual experience are sex, and church attendance. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to have a positive attitude toward Christian spiritual experience, together with pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month. If schools are to seek to promote this aspect of pupils' spiritual development, teachers of religious education might focus on teaching approaches that encourage appreciation of church buildings and church music, and a sympathetic understanding of the meaning for believers of the major Christian rites and practices.

Chapter eleven

Attitude toward Christianity

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Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward Christianity. *Circular 1/94* stressed that religious education was to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual development (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4), and that at each key stage the content relating to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35). Pupils' responses to statements relating to key aspects of Christianity are therefore used as measures of pupils' spiritual development. The present research uses an established scale of attitude toward Christianity to assess this aspect of pupils' spiritual development. This chapter first presents the scale that measures attitude toward Christianity. Secondly, it provides a profile of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward this aspect of their spiritual development. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward Christianity. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' attitudes toward Christianity. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Attitude toward Christianity: testing an attitude scale

The present research uses the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (Francis and Stubbs 1978) to measure attitude toward Christianity. The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity is a homogeneous and unidimensional scale that has been used in well over a hundred studies, and has been shown to function reliably and validly throughout the secondary school age range. It consists of 24 items measuring response to five key areas of the Christian tradition, namely, God, Jesus, the Bible, prayer and the Church. Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. These 24 items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 11.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.9593 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 11.1 Attitude toward Christianity: scale properties

item	r
I find it boring to listen to the Bible *	0.3732
I know that Jesus helps me	0.8020
Saying my prayers helps me a lot	0.7737
The Church is very important to me	0.7455
I think going to Church is a waste of my time *	0.4864
I want to love Jesus	0.7998
I think Church services are boring *	0.4157
I think people who pray are stupid *	0.3550
God helps me to lead a better life	0.8106
I like to learn about God very much	0.7893
God means a lot to me	0.8553
I believe that God helps people	0.8088
Prayer helps me a lot	0.8144
I know that Jesus is very close to me	0.8237
I think praying is a good thing	0.7805
I think the Bible is out of date *	0.4342
I believe that God listens to prayers	0.7967
Jesus doesn't mean anything to me *	0.5983
God is very real to me	0.8158
I think saying prayers does no good *	0.5882
The idea of God means much to me	0.8357
I believe that Jesus still helps people	0.7886
I know that God helps me	0.8448
I find it hard to believe in God *	0.5954

* These items are reverse scored

Alpha = 0.9593

Attitude toward Christianity: profile of the whole sample

Table 11.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items.

Table 11.2 Attitude toward Christianity: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
I find it boring to listen to the Bible	54	24	22
I know that Jesus helps me	12	33	55
Saying my prayers helps me a lot	16	25	59
The Church is very important to me	8	21	71
I think going to Church is a waste of my time	44	30	26
I want to love Jesus	12	28	60
I think Church services are boring	60	22	18
I think people who pray are stupid	15	26	59
God helps me to lead a better life	10	32	58
I like to learn about God very much	10	26	64
God means a lot to me	13	25	62
I believe that God helps people	20	32	49
Prayer helps me a lot	15	25	61
I know that Jesus is very close to me	10	27	63
I think praying is a good thing	23	33	44
I think the Bible is out of date	40	31	29
I believe that God listens to prayers	20	35	46
Jesus doesn't mean anything to me	35	32	33
God is very real to me	14	32	54
I think saying prayers does no good	34	33	33
The idea of God means much to me	13	33	54
I believe that Jesus still helps people	14	34	52
I know that God helps me	13	31	56
I find it hard to believe in God	58	23	19

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

Of the 24 items, nine relate to attitude toward God. Well over half the pupils (58%) find it hard to believe in God, compared with almost a quarter (23%) who are unsure and a fifth (19%) who do not find it hard. Regarding the sort of God that pupils believe in, a fifth (20%) believe in the general statements that God helps people and that God listens to prayers. Yet smaller numbers (13%) believe that God helps them personally, and only 10% think that God helps them to lead a better life. These data suggest that some pupils believe in a God who cares, but have not experienced God's care for them personally. Perhaps understandably, then, only a small percentage of the pupils (13%) feel that God means a lot to them, and only 10% like very much to learn about God. Around a third of the pupils express uncertainty in response to items that involve the notion of a personal relationship with a God who cares, and over half the pupils respond negatively. These findings suggest that pupils are open to belief yet receive little encouragement, whether from religious education or otherwise, to believe in God, and even less to believe in a God who might care for them.

Five items relate to attitude toward Jesus. Only 14% of the pupils believe that Jesus still helps people. Even fewer pupils believe that Jesus helps them (12%) or is very close to them (10%). Perhaps understandably, then, only 12% of the pupils express the desire to love Jesus. Yet in response to the statement 'Jesus doesn't mean anything to me', the sample is almost equally divided. A third are unsure, just over a third (35%) agree, and a third disagree.

Six items relate to the subject of prayer. Only 15% of the pupils agree with the statement 'I think people who pray are stupid' and 59% disagree. This suggests that pupils are tolerant toward others' religious beliefs and practices. Far fewer pupils believe in the efficacy of prayer. Just over one in five pupils (23%) think praying is a good thing (44% disagree), and exactly one in five pupils (20%) believe that God listens to prayers (46% disagree). When the statement is personalised, even fewer

pupils express confidence in prayer. In response to two items that suggest that prayer helps them a lot, few pupils (15%and16%) respond positively, whilst 61% and 59% disagree. However, the sample is divided equally in thirds in response to the statement 'I think saying prayers does no good'. An explanation of this may be that a statement that includes 'no' or 'not' and requires agreement or disagreement is ambiguous for many pupils, since the statement 'Jesus doesn't mean anything to me' has the same pattern of response.

Three items relate to churchgoing. Only 8% of the pupils feel that the Church is very important to them, whilst 71%, the highest number of negative responses in this scale, disagree. More than two in five pupils (44%) consider churchgoing a waste of their time yet a only quarter of the pupils (26%) disagree. A third of the pupils (30%) express uncertainty. Three in five pupils (60%) consider church services boring, whilst almost one in five (18%) disagree, and just over one in five (22%) express uncertainty. Data from elsewhere in the questionnaire show that only 7% of the pupils attend church regularly, and 33% attend sometimes. The data presented in table 11.2 suggest that if churches were to provide services that relate to teenage interests, teenage attendances might increase.

Two items relate to the Bible. Over half the pupils (54%) find it boring to listen to the Bible, yet only two in five (40%) consider the Bible out of date. This suggests that pupils are not interested in having the Bible read to them but may see some value in studying the Bible in the context of its relevance to contemporary living.

Throughout the scale at least a fifth of the pupils express uncertainty, and this proportion rises to a third on some items. Pupils are most uncertain about whether God listens to prayers (35%), whether Jesus still helps people (34%), whether saying prayers does any good, whether Jesus helps them, and whether the idea of God means much to them (33%). Overall, the data show that the majority of pupils find it hard to believe in God and even harder to believe in a God or Jesus who is involved in any way with them. Similarly, the majority of the pupils have negative attitudes toward prayer, church and the Bible, although between a quarter and a third of the pupils express uncertainty throughout.

Comparing school approaches

Attitude toward Christianity: by school approach to religious education

Table 11.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christianity and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items in the teacher questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 11.3 compares the attitude toward Christianity of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 11.3 Attitude toward Christianity: by school approach to religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	687	60.7	21.8
adequate	2403	60.3	21.0

F= 0.3, NS

Table 11.3 shows that there is no significant difference in the scores of pupils in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist and the scores of those in schools where provision is inadequate. Table 11.2 shows that overall, the majority of pupils find it hard to believe in God and have negative attitudes toward prayer, church and the Bible. Table 11.3 suggests that whether the older pupils receive much religious education or not, there is little difference in their attitudes. The following tables will seek to discover the factors within the religious education that pupils do receive that might affect pupils' attitudes toward Christianity.

Attitude toward Christianity: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 11.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christianity and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be

given priority. Responses to items in the Cornwall teachers' questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 11.4 compares the attitude toward Christianity of pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 11.4 Attitude toward Christianity: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	1036	58.8	20.7
world religions	2054	61.1	21.4

F= 8.6, P< .01

Table 11.4 and the following tables will look for indications of whether the lesson content or the teaching approaches are responsible for the generally negative attitudes toward belief in God or Jesus (see table 11.2 above), or whether other factors are at work. Table 11.4 shows that pupils in schools with a 'world religions' approach are likely to have a more positive attitude toward Christianity than pupils in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance. This suggests that an emphasis on Jesus' life and teachings, taught by means of frequent use of the Bible, fails to make pupils sympathetic toward a Christianity which is measured in terms of belief in God, Jesus, the Bible, prayer and the Church. In contrast, an approach that places Christianity alongside other religions may enable pupils to see more clearly the possibility of religious faith and may thus encourage more positive attitudes toward Christianity.

Attitude toward Christianity: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 11.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christianity and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately,

usually referred to as a 'systematic' approach. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 11.5 compares the attitude toward Christianity of the pupils in schools where the approach is thematic, pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately, and pupils in schools where the approach is 'mixed'.

Table 11.5 Attitude toward Christianity: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	725	59.8	21.8
separate	1390	61.1	20.8
mixed	975	59.6	21.1

F= 1.9, NS

Table 11.5 shows that there is no significant difference in the scores of pupils in schools where the religions are taught thematically, where they are taught independently of each other, or where there is a mixture of a thematic or 'separate' approach. This suggests that the method of teaching the religions does not affect pupils' generally negative attitudes toward Christianity.

Attitude toward Christianity: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 11.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christianity and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a

phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 11.6 compares the attitudes toward Christianity of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 11.6 Attitude toward Christianity: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1801	61.2	20.9
experiential	598	60.0	21.8
mixed	691	58.4	21.2

F= 4.6, P< .05

Table 11.6 suggests that where the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, pupils are more likely to have a positive attitude toward Christianity than pupils in schools where the teaching approach seeks to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences. Where there is a mixture of approaches there is an even less positive attitude. Since the Francis scale of Attitude toward Christianity involves an affective approach, the finding that an experiential approach to religious education is not the most likely to encourage positive attitudes toward Christianity is perhaps surprising. A possible explanation may be that frequent use of the Bible, one of the main criteria for identifying schools as having a 'mainly Christianity' approach, may suggest to pupils a desire on the part of the teacher to proselytise. It may also be that pupils prefer a religious education that does not challenge their own beliefs, and may feel more sympathetic toward Christianity when viewing it from an observational, detached perspective.

School approaches and attitude toward Christianity: summary

The data relating to school approaches and attitude toward Christianity show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their attitudes toward Christianity whether school approaches to religious education are minimalist or adequate, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, where religious education is provided adequately for these older pupils, pupils in schools that have a 'world

religions' approach are more likely to have positive attitudes toward Christianity than pupils in schools where Christianity is taught 'in the main'. Similarly, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to have positive attitudes toward Christianity than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. These findings suggest that an emphasis on Jesus' life and teachings, taught by means of frequent use of the Bible, fails to make pupils sympathetic toward a Christianity which is measured in terms of belief in God, Jesus, the Bible, prayer and the Church. A further explanation may be that frequent use of the Bible, one of the main criteria for identifying schools as having a 'mainly Christianity' approach, may suggest to pupils a desire on the part of the teacher to proselytise. In contrast, an approach that places Christianity alongside other religions may enable pupils to see more clearly the possibility of religious faith and may thus encourage more positive attitudes toward Christianity. It may also be that pupils prefer a religious education that does not challenge their own beliefs, and feel more sympathetic toward Christianity when viewing it from a from an observational, detached and critical perspective.

Since the preceding data suggest that the adequate provision of religious education is not a significant factor in influencing pupils' attitudes toward Christianity, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and attitude toward Christianity

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 10.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christianity and the sex of the pupils.

Table 11.7 Attitude toward Christianity: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1556	58.2	21.2
female	1529	62.6	21.0

F= 33.1, P< .001

Table 11.7 shows that the girls in the sample record a significantly more positive attitude toward Christianity than the boys (P< .001). Research has shown that females have more positive attitudes toward most aspects of religion than males (Greeley 1992, Kay and Francis 1996: 10), and girls consistently record more positive attitudes than boys to Christianity (see Kay and Francis 1996: 16-18). The data presented in table 11.7 support these findings.

Church attendance and attitude toward Christianity

A number of research studies have shown that church attendance is a predictor of positive attitudes toward Christianity (see Francis 2001: 162). In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 11.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christianity and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 11.8 Attitude toward Christianity: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1834	54.2	19.3
sometimes	1027	66.3	18.3
at least once a month	207	85.5	23.0

F= 321.1, P< .001

Table 11.8 shows that frequent churchgoing is likely to relate closely to a positive attitude toward Christianity. This finding supports the earlier research findings. The data show that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are more likely to have a positive attitude toward Christianity than those who sometimes attend (P< .001), and pupils who never attend are less likely to have a positive attitude. Thus, pupils who attend church at least once a month are likely to have positive attitudes toward God, Jesus, the Bible, prayer and the Church. This suggests that although the percentage of pupils who frequently attend church is very small, churches are making a significant contribution to their spiritual development when this is viewed in a Christian context.

Academic expectations and *attitude toward Christianity*

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and attitude toward Christianity. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve only D-G grades in the GCSE examinations, or no passes. A third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils. Table 11.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christianity and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 11.9 Attitude toward Christianity: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	473	59.4	20.3
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	1000	59.6	20.9
5 or more GCSE A-C	854	60.5	20.3
1 to 2 A or AS level	670	61.4	22.9

F= 1.3, NS

Table 11.9 shows that intelligence is not a factor that influences attitude toward Christianity. Those who are the most academically able are no more likely to have a positive attitude toward Christianity than the least academically able. A possible explanation may be that intelligence is defined here in terms that relate primarily to cognitive development, whereas attitude toward Christianity, measured by the items in the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity, relates primarily to the emotions.

Television viewing and attitude toward Christianity

As noted earlier, research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the

specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 11.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward Christianity and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on the specified day.

Table 11.10 Attitude toward Christianity: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	484	63.4	23.1
3 to 4 hours	2081	60.6	20.5
over 4 hours	519	56.9	21.5

F= 12.0, P< .001

Table 11.10 shows that pupils who watched over four hours are the least likely to have a positive attitude toward Christianity, whilst pupils who watched less than one hour are the most likely to have a positive attitude (P< .001). An explanation for these findings may be that most television programmes present negative images of religion. As suggested earlier, on the one hand the ever-present acts of violence between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland and the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for example, present religion in general and Christianity in particular as a major source of international discord. On the other hand, clerics and church members alike are frequently portrayed as dishonest, immoral, or as figures of fun. Pupils who watch many hours of television each day are therefore less likely to view Christianity positively.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and attitude toward Christianity show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their attitudes toward Christianity, whether provision for religious education is adequate or not, or whether they are taught religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools that have a 'world religions' approach are more likely to have positive attitudes toward Christianity than pupils in schools where Christianity is taught 'in the main', and pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to have positive attitudes toward Christianity than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. This suggests

that an emphasis on Jesus' life and teachings, taught by means of frequent use of the Bible, fails to make pupils sympathetic toward a Christianity which is measured in terms of belief in God, Jesus, the Bible, prayer and the Church. In contrast, an approach that places Christianity alongside other religions and views religions from a detached perspective may enable pupils to see more clearly the possibility of religious faith and may thus encourage more positive attitudes toward Christianity.

In addition to these teaching approaches that are likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in attitude toward Christianity are sex, church attendance and television viewing. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to have positive attitudes toward Christianity, as are pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month and pupils who watch little television. If schools are to seek to promote this aspect of pupils' spiritual development, teachers of religious education need to identify an approach to the subject that appeals more strongly to teenage boys, perhaps by encouraging a closer examination of what the Christian faith means for believers. Such an approach might counteract the negative images presented by television, and at the same time, encourage pupils to consider involvement in church-related activities.

Chapter twelve

Index of Christian belief

Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the spiritual development of year nine and year ten pupils by means of an index of Christian belief. *Circular 1/94* stressed that religious education was to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual development, that pupils were to make their own responses to religions' responses to questions about fundamental questions (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4), and that the content relating to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35). Christian responses to 'fundamental questions' can be found primarily in statements of Christian belief, such as the creeds. Pupils' own responses to such statements may therefore indicate pupils' spiritual attitude. This chapter first describes the development of a scale to measure pupils' beliefs in relation to the Christian faith. Secondly, it provides a profile of the beliefs of all pupils in the sample. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the Christianity-related beliefs of year nine and year ten pupils. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' beliefs. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Developing an index of Christian belief

The questionnaire used in the pupil survey contains 27 items relating to biblical and credal statements of Christian belief. Included are 12 items developed by Francis and Gibson (1996) as a measure of Christian fundamentalist belief, this being defined as such according to its central doctrines of the authority and literal inerrancy of the Bible (Peshkin 1986, Boone 1990). In the present study further items are based upon statements found in the Christian creeds, the *Articles of Religion* of the Anglican church, the gospels, and the Genesis creation accounts. There is a focus upon the miraculous or supernatural elements that are distinctive of the Christian faith and Christian doctrine.

Pupils are asked to respond to the question 'What do you believe?' Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items.

Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. In the present study, rest of test correlations have identified from the pool of 27 items the 15 items that cohere to produce the best homogeneous and unidimensional scale measuring Christian belief. These 15 items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 12.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.9538 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 12.1 Index of Christian belief: scale properties

item	r
I believe in heaven	0.6859
I believe in hell	0.5096
God has a plan for my life	0.7485
God created the world	0.7931
God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh	0.7608
The bible is the word of God	0.7609
Jesus was born of a virgin	0.6806
Jesus will return to earth some day	0.7430
God judges what I do and say	0.7815
Jesus died to save me	0.8084
Jesus changed real water into real wine	0.8246
Jesus walked on water	0.8275
Jesus Christ is the Son of God	0.8124
Jesus really rose from the dead	0.8355
The Devil tempts people to do wrong	0.6059

Alpha = 0.9538

Index of Christian belief: profile of the whole sample

Table 12.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and

'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

Table 12.2 Index of Christian belief: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
I believe in heaven	39	32	29
I believe in hell	31	34	35
God has a plan for my life	13	27	60
God created the world	23	35	43
God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh	16	33	51
The bible is the word of God	24	34	43
Jesus was born of a virgin	25	35	40
Jesus will return to earth some day	9	32	59
God judges what I do and say	12	29	59
Jesus died to save me	15	30	55
Jesus changed real water into real wine	13	36	52
Jesus walked on water	12	35	53
Jesus Christ is the Son of God	30	34	36
Jesus really rose from the dead	15	38	47
The Devil tempts people to do wrong	21	32	47

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the the nearest whole numbers.

For half the items over half the pupils respond negatively to the question 'What do you believe?' The items attracting the highest proportions of negative responses to the question 'What do you believe?' are 'God has a plan for my life' (60% disagree compared with 13% who agree), and 'Jesus will return to earth some day' (59% disagree compared with just 9% who agree). Other statements of belief with relatively high proportions of negative responses are 'God judges what I do and say' (59% disagree, 12% agree), and 'Jesus died to save me' (55% disagree, 15% agree). Further items that attract negative responses from over half the pupils are 'Jesus walked on water' (53% disagree, 12% agree), 'Jesus changed real water into real wine' (52% disagree, 13% agree), and 'God made the world in six days and rested on

the seventh' (51% disagree, 16% agree). Approximately a third of the pupils express uncertainty throughout. The statement 'Jesus really rose from the dead', attracts the highest proportion of pupils expressing uncertainty (38%). The items that draw the most positive responses to the question 'What do you believe?' are 'I believe in heaven' (39%), 'I believe in hell' (31%), and 'Jesus Christ is the Son of God' (30%).

The data suggest that whilst most pupils respond negatively to all statements of conservative, some might argue fundamentalist, Christian belief, pupils find it most difficult to believe in Jesus' miracles, or that the God of the Christian faith is involved in any way in their personal lives. These findings concur with the findings of the earlier data relating to spiritual experience, whether Christian or otherwise, and may suggest that most pupils place their faith in science or reason rather than the possibility of a benevolent 'power beyond themselves'.

Comparing school approaches

Index of Christian belief: by school approach to religious education
Table 12.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the index of Christian belief and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 12.3 compares the level of Christian belief found in pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and in pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 12.3 Index of Christian belief: by school approach to religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	665	39.2	14.7
adequate	2256	37.2	14.6

F= 8.9, P< .01

Table 12.3 shows that pupils in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist are more likely to respond positively to statements of Christian belief than those in schools where provision is adequate. Table 12.2 showed that the majority of

pupils do not believe in most statements of Christian belief that involve the miraculous or supernatural, nor in the idea that God is in any way involved in their lives. Table 12.3 shows that pupils are more likely to respond positively to statements of Christian belief in schools where the approach to religious education is minimalist than in schools where provision is adequate. This suggests that those pupils whose responses are positive are likely to be influenced in their religious beliefs by sources other than religious education.

Index of Christian belief: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 12.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the measure of Christian belief and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the teacher questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools in Cornwall Christianity was not given predominance. In all, just 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 12.4 compares the level of Christian belief found in pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 12.4 Index of Christian belief: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	1009	37.0	14.4
world religions	1912	38.0	14.8

$F = 2.8$, NS

Table 12.4 shows that there is no significant difference between the levels of Christian belief whether pupils are in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance or in schools where Christianity and other world religions are taught in equal measure. This suggests that whether schools pay more attention to

Jesus' life, teachings and miracles, or whether they teach all religions equally, and generally predominantly in terms of their 'external' phenomena, most pupils are equally disinclined to believe in the miraculous aspects of Christianity and Christian doctrine.

Index of Christian belief: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 12.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the index of Christian belief and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately, usually referred to as a 'systematic' approach. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 12.5 compares the level of Christian belief found in pupils in schools where the approach is thematic, in schools where the religions are taught separately, and in schools where the approach is 'mixed'.

Table 12.5 Index of Christian belief: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	711	38.5	14.4
separate	1269	37.3	14.8
mixed	941	37.6	14.7

F= 1.5, NS

Table 12.5 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' levels of Christian belief whether religions are taught thematically or independently of each other, or with a mixture of thematic or 'separate' approaches. This suggests that the method of teaching the religions is not responsible for pupils' generally negative responses to statements of Christian belief.

Index of Christian belief: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 12.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the index of Christian belief and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as taking a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as using an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 12.6 compares the levels of Christian belief in pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 12.6 Index of Christian belief: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1662	38.2	14.5
experiential	576	37.7	15.0
mixed	683	36.5	14.7

$F = 3.4, P < .05$

Table 12.6 shows that pupils in schools where the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions are more likely to respond positively to statements of Christian belief than pupils in schools where the teaching approach seeks to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences. Where there is a mixture of approaches there is a lower level of positive response. A phenomenological approach is usually associated with a 'world religions' approach. It seems that pupils are more sympathetic to Christian beliefs when they are considered in the light of the beliefs of other religions. It may also be felt that a critical, detached approach demonstrates that there is no desire on the part of the teacher to proselytise, and it may be that pupils prefer an approach that does not challenge their own beliefs.

School approaches and index of Christian belief: summary

The data relating to school approaches and acceptance of Christian belief show that pupils in schools that have a minimalist approach to religious education are more likely to accept Christian beliefs than pupils in schools where provision for religious education is adequate. This suggests that factors that have an impact on the acceptance or rejection of Christian beliefs are unrelated to religious education. Within the context of religious education, pupils are unlikely to differ in their responses to statements of Christian belief whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or whether there is a 'world religions' approach, and whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to accept Christian beliefs than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. These findings suggest that, since a minimalist approach is likely to result in more positive responses to statements of Christian belief, the religious education that is received by the older pupils may have the opposite effect. It seems that it is unlikely to make pupils sympathetic toward Christian beliefs, with their strong focus on a non-material world. In the religious education that is provided, it seems that pupils may be more inclined to accept Christian beliefs if their religious education does not challenge their own beliefs, and may feel more sympathetic toward Christian beliefs when viewing them from an observational, detached and critical perspective.

Since the preceding data suggest that religious education is not a significant factor in influencing pupils' acceptance of Christian beliefs, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and index of Christian belief

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 12.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the index of Christian belief experience and the sex of the pupils.

Table 12.7 Index of Christian belief: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1443	35.6	14.9
female	1473	40.0	14.1

$F = 59.5$, $P < .001$

Table 12.7 shows that the girls in the sample display a higher level of Christian belief than do the boys ($P < .001$). Research has shown that women are more religious than men in most aspects of religion (Greeley 1992), and similarly, that girls consistently record more positive attitudes than boys to most aspects of religious belief, behaviour and experience (see Francis 1997). The data presented in table 12.7 support these findings.

Church attendance and index of Christian belief

Research has shown that there is a strong relationship between church attendance and Christian beliefs (see Francis and Kay 1995: 141-144). In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 12.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the index of Christian belief and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 12.8 Index of Christian belief: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1721	33.3	13.3
sometimes	981	41.8	12.6
at least once a month	198	55.2	16.3

$F = 312.0$, $P < .001$

Table 12.8 shows that frequent churchgoing is likely to relate to a higher level of acceptance of Christian beliefs. The data show that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are more likely to accept Christian beliefs than those who sometimes attend ($P < .001$), and pupils who never attend are the least likely to respond positively to statements of Christian belief. Thus, pupils

who attend church at least once a month are the most likely to accept the statements of belief found in the creeds, and to accept the miraculous elements of the Christian faith. This suggests that churches are making a significant contribution to their spiritual development if this is interpreted in terms of acceptance of Christian beliefs.

Academic expectations and index of Christian belief

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and acceptance of Christian beliefs. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve only D-G grades in the GCSE examinations, or no passes. A third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils. Table 12.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the index of Christian belief and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 12.9 Index of Christian belief: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	429	36.8	15.8
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	950	38.1	13.8
5 or more GCSE A-C	806	37.5	14.0
1 to 2 A or AS level	652	37.8	15.7

$F= 0.9$, NS

Table 12.9 shows that intelligence is not a factor that influences acceptance of Christian beliefs. Those who are the most academically able are no more likely to respond positively to statements of Christian belief than the least academically able. A possible explanation may be that intelligence is defined here in terms that relate primarily to cognitive development, whereas Christian belief, measured by items that focus on the miraculous, may relate to experience or intuition rather than to the rational mind.

Television viewing and index of Christian belief

As noted earlier, a number of research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 12.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the index of Christian belief and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on one particular day.

Table 12.10 Index of Christian belief: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	446	38.5	16.2
3 to 4 hours	1975	38.0	14.1
over 4 hours	495	35.8	15.1

F= 5.4, P< .01

Table 12.10 shows that pupils who watched television for over four hours are the least likely to respond positively to statements of Christian belief, whilst pupils who watched for less than one hour are the most likely to respond positively (P< .01). The items used to measure Christian belief focus strongly on the supernatural elements of the Christian faith. Although some television programmes deal with the supernatural, data provided by earlier parts of the pupil questionnaire show that the programmes watched most frequently by pupils are the television soaps, with their emphases on materialistic values. Pupils who watch many hours of television each day are therefore unlikely to view Christian belief positively.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and acceptance of Christian belief show that pupils in schools that have a minimalist approach to religious education are more likely to respond positively to statements of Christian belief than pupils in schools

where provision for religious education is adequate. Moreover, pupils are unlikely to differ in their responses to statements of Christian belief whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or whether there is a 'world religions' approach, and whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to respond positively to statements of Christian belief than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. These findings suggest that, since a minimalist approach is likely to result in higher levels of Christian belief, the religious education received by the older pupils has the opposite effect. It appears that it fails to make pupils sympathetic toward Christian belief, particularly when there is a focus on the supernatural or miraculous. Where religious education is provided, it seems that pupils may be more likely to accept Christian beliefs when viewing them from a from an observational, detached and critical perspective.

In addition to these teaching approaches that are likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to influence levels of acceptance of Christian belief are sex, and church attendance. Teenage girls display a higher level of Christian belief than boys, as do pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month, and pupils who watch little television. If schools are to seek to promote this aspect of pupils' spiritual development, teachers of religious education might encourage teenage boys to consider seriously the supernatural elements in Christianity. The data provided by earlier parts of the pupil questionnaire indicate that two in five pupils watch television programmes that deal with the occult at least once a month, around half of these, weekly. This interest in the supernatural could therefore perhaps be encouraged in a Christian context.

Chapter thirteen

Moral attitude toward personal choices

Overview

This chapter and the following chapters set out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward moral issues. *Circular 1/94* stressed that religious education was to make a major contribution to pupils' moral development (Department for Education 1994: paragraphs 4, 9 and 39). All religions have an ethical dimension (see Smart 1989), and *Circular 1/94* recommended that pupils make their own responses to religions' responses to questions about 'morality and ethical standards' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4). Since *Circular 1/94* stated that at each key stage the content relating to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35), the following chapters use pupils' responses to statements relating to Christian moral beliefs as measures of pupils' moral development. Whilst recognising that there is no Christian consensus of opinion on some issues, assessment of pupils' moral attitudes uses the Bible, and in particular the New testament, as the main source of Christian moral authority. The items chosen to measure moral attitude also include many of those recommended to schools by the National Curriculum Council (1993a: 4) as 'moral absolutes', determined as absolute by the consensus of 'social, cultural and religious groups'. In general these exemplify items that draw on biblical material for a moral stance.

The questionnaire used in the pupil survey contains 56 items relating to moral issues. The items have been grouped together to fit into five main categories of moral issues, namely, personal choices, sex, drugs, property and environmental issues. This chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale to measure pupils' moral attitudes toward personal choices. Secondly, it provides a profile of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward this aspect of their moral development. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the moral attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward personal choices. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' moral attitudes toward personal choices. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Moral attitude toward personal choices: developing an attitude scale

This chapter assesses the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward personal morality. Eight items measure response to moral issues that are not directly related to legal requirements but instead relate to a personal moral code. These 8 items cohere to produce at homogeneous and unidimensional scale measuring moral attitude toward personal choices. In order to ensure a uniform approach throughout, most items begin with the stem 'It is wrong to...'. Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. The 8 items representing moral attitude toward personal choices, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 13.1. The scale achieves the satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.8211 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 13.1 Moral attitude toward personal choices: scale properties

item	r
It is wrong to tell lies	0.4750
It is wrong to disobey your parents	0.5552
It is wrong to play truant from school	0.5233
It is wrong to swear	0.6296
It is wrong to put money on horses	0.5826
It is wrong to buy lottery tickets	0.5163
It is wrong to take a bribe	0.5284
Gambling is wrong	0.5238

Alpha = 0.8211

Moral attitude toward personal choices: profile of the whole sample

Table 13.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and

'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

Table 13.2 Moral attitude toward personal choices: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
It is wrong to tell lies	46	32	22
It is wrong to disobey your parents	34	31	35
It is wrong to play truant from school	52	25	23
It is wrong to swear	15	24	61
It is wrong to put money on horses	13	25	62
It is wrong to buy lottery tickets	6	15	79
It is wrong to take a bribe	26	36	38
Gambling is wrong	17	29	54

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Table 13.2 shows that with regard to pupils' moral attitudes in relation to the general issues of honesty and respect for authority, just over half (52%) think it is wrong to play truant from school, 46% think it wrong to tell lies, 34% think it wrong to disobey parents, and just 26% think it wrong to take a bribe. Three items relate to the issue of gambling, considered wrong in Christian terms since it encourages people to rely on chance rather than God's providence (see Atkinson and Field 1995: 402). One in six pupils (17%) think gambling is wrong, and even smaller numbers think it is wrong to put money on horses (13%) or buy lottery tickets (6%). It seems that whereas one in six pupils think gambling is wrong, a number of these pupils do not associate betting on horses with gambling, and even fewer see buying lottery tickets as a form of gambling. It is likely that pupils may see 'a day at the races' or buying lottery tickets as amoral leisure activities, perhaps because they are widely practised and may involve parents' or older pupil friends' participation. A mere 15% of the pupils think it wrong to swear. Similarly, swearing is commonplace both in television programmes and for many, in everyday language. This may account for the fact that 61% of pupils do not think it wrong to swear.

Well over twice as many pupils think it wrong (52%) to truant from school as those who find nothing wrong in it (23%), whilst a quarter of the pupils are unsure. This suggests that the majority of the pupils are aware that they should be in school and consider it right to be there. Although similar numbers of pupils think there is nothing wrong in telling lies (22%), less than half the pupils (46%) consider it wrong. Even fewer pupils think it wrong to disobey parents – the sample is divided almost equally into thirds on this issue. It seems that pupils feel a stronger moral obligation to attend school than to be truthful or to respect parents. This suggests that schools are in a position to make a significant contribution to pupils' moral development.

Comparing school approaches

Moral attitude toward personal choices: by school approach to religious education

Table 13.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward personal choices and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 13.3 compares the moral attitude toward personal choices of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 13.3 Moral attitude toward personal choices: by school approach to religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	625	21.4	6.4
adequate	2145	21.5	6.3

F= 0.0, NS

Table 13.3 shows that there is no significant difference in the moral attitude toward personal choices of pupils in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist and those in schools where provision is adequate. The same proportions of pupils are equally likely to consider it wrong to play truant from school, or disobey their parents, or gamble or tell lies, whether they are in schools where they

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receive little religious education or adequate religious education. This suggests that the moral teachings of the religions taught in school are unlikely to be the factors that influence pupils' moral choices in these areas.

Moral attitude toward personal choices: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 13.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward personal choices and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the teacher questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools in Cornwall Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 13.4 compares the moral attitude toward personal choices of pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 13.4 Moral attitude toward personal choices: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	962	21.7	6.3
world religions	1808	21.3	6.3

F= 2.8, NS

Table 13.4 shows that there is no significant difference in the moral attitudes of pupils in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance and those in schools where Christianity and other world religions are taught in equal measure. The same proportions of pupils are equally likely to consider it wrong to play truant from school, disobey their parents, gamble or tell lies, whether they are in schools where there is a focus on Christian moral stances and the ethics of the Old and New Testaments or on the moral teachings of other religions.

Moral attitude toward personal choices: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 13.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward personal choices and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately, usually referred to as a 'systematic' approach. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 13.5 compares the moral attitude toward personal choices of the pupils in schools where the approach is thematic, pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately, and pupils in schools where the approach is 'mixed'.

Table 13.5 Moral attitude toward personal choices: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	696	21.5	6.1
separate	1166	21.4	6.2
mixed	908	21.5	6.6

$F = 0.1$, NS

Table 13.5 shows that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of pupils toward such issues as telling the truth, obeying parents or gambling, whether the religions are taught thematically or independently of each other, or whether there is a mixture of thematic and systematic approaches. This suggests that the method of teaching the religions plays no part in influencing pupils' moral attitudes in these particular areas.

Moral attitude toward personal choices: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 13.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward personal choices and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 13.6 compares the moral attitude toward personal choices of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 13.6 Moral attitude toward personal choices: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1555	21.7	6.3
experiential	541	20.8	6.7
mixed	674	21.3	6.1

$F = 4.8$, $P < .01$

Table 13.6 suggests that a teaching approach that focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions is the most likely to encourage positive moral attitudes in areas such as obedience to parents and telling the truth, for example. Schools where the teaching approach seeks to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences are the least likely to result in positive moral attitudes in these areas. This finding is surprising, since it would seem that an approach that encourages pupils to examine their own beliefs and values would be more likely to encourage positive moral attitudes than an approach that is objective and detached. Since a phenomenological approach is usually associated with a 'world religions' approach, a possible explanation may be that pupils are more sympathetic to

Christian ethics when considered in the light of the moral teachings of other religions. It may be that a critical, detached approach demonstrates that there is no desire on the part of the teacher to inculcate Christian moral values, and pupils therefore feel free to make their own decisions. It may also be that pupils prefer an approach that does not put their own moral attitudes into a religious context.

School approaches and moral attitude toward personal choices: summary

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward personal choices show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitude toward personal choices whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or whether there is a 'world religions' approach, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward matters of personal choice than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. This may suggest that pupils may have more positive attitudes toward moral values founded on Christian principles if their religious education views Christian moral values objectively and critically, and does not encourage them to consider their own moral values in the light of Christian teaching. For the most part, it seems that government desires for religious education to play an important role in pupils' moral development, at least in the areas itemised in this chapter, are unfulfilled.

Since the preceding data suggest that religious education is not a significant factor in influencing pupils' moral attitudes in areas of personal choice, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and moral attitude toward personal choices

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 13.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward personal choices and the sex of the pupils.

Table 13.7 Moral attitude toward personal choices: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1374	21.0	6.8
female	1391	21.8	5.7

F= 11.6, P< .001

Table 13.7 shows that the girls in the sample record significantly more positive moral attitudes than do the boys (P< .001). A number of research studies have shown that teenage girls have more positive attitudes toward general issues of 'right and wrong' than teenage boys (see, for example, Francis and Kay 1995). This finding is thus consistent with the findings of previous studies.

Church attendance and moral attitude toward personal choices

In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 13.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward personal choices and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 13.8 Moral attitude toward personal choices: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1622	20.4	6.2
sometimes	933	22.2	5.6
at least once a month	193	26.6	7.3

F= 99.6, P< .001

Table 13.8 shows that frequent churchgoing is likely to have a positive influence on pupils' attitudes toward the moral issues listed above. The data show that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward these matters of personal choice than those who sometimes attend (P< .001), and pupils who never attend are the least likely to have a positive attitude. Thus, pupils who attend church at least once a month are likely to consider it wrong to tell lies, disobey parents, truant from school, or gamble, for

example. This suggests that churches are making a significant contribution to some aspects of pupils' moral development.

Academic expectations and moral attitude toward personal choices

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and moral attitude toward matters of personal choice. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve only D-G grades in the GCSE examinations, or no passes. A third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils. Table 13.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward personal choices and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 13.9 Moral attitude toward personal choices: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	405	20.8	7.1
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	897	21.4	6.0
5 or more GCSE A-C	769	21.5	6.0
1 to 2 A or AS level	621	21.8	6.4

F= 2.3, NS

Table 13.9 shows that intelligence is not a factor that influences moral attitude toward personal choices. Those who are the most academically able are no more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward matters of personal choice than the least academically able. This suggests that pupils are more likely to be influenced in areas such as gambling or disobeying parents by factors such as peer pressure, for example, than by the ability to achieve high academic standards.

Television viewing and moral attitude toward personal choices

As noted earlier, a number of research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 13.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward personal choices and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on one particular day.

Table 13.10 Moral attitude toward personal choices: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	431	22.3	7.3
3 to 4 hours	1865	21.6	5.9
over 4 hours	469	20.0	6.7

$F = 17.1$, $P < .001$

Table 13.10 shows that pupils who watched television for over four hours are the least likely to have positive moral attitudes toward personal choices, whilst pupils who watched for less than one hour are the most likely to have a positive attitude ($P < .001$). A number of research studies have reported positive correlations between television viewing and anti-social behaviour (see Francis 2001: 181, 182). The data presented in table 13.10 support these findings in the sense that pupils who watch many hours of television each day are likely to have negative attitudes toward issues that relate to anti-social behaviour, such as truancy from school, accepting bribes, and gambling.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward personal choices show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward matters of personal choice whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious

education, whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or there is a 'world religions' approach, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward the issues listed above than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. It seems that pupils are more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward the issues listed above if the approach is detached and evaluative, rather than if the approach encourages them to consider their own moral values in the light of Christian values, for example. For the most part, it seems that government desires for religious education to play an important role in pupils' moral development, at least in the areas itemised in this chapter, are unfulfilled.

In addition to the one teaching approach that is likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in moral attitude toward personal choices are sex, church attendance and television viewing. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to have positive moral attitudes toward personal choices, together with those who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month and those who watch television for less than an hour a day. If religious education is to promote pupils' moral development in the areas listed in this chapter, teachers might consider encouraging more positive attitudes toward Christianity in general, in the hope that pupils, particularly boys, may become more sympathetic toward involvement in church-related activities. Involvement in a lively church youth club, for example, might counter the negative effects of time spent watching television programmes that do not encourage positive moral attitudes.

Chapter fourteen

Moral attitude toward sex

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Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward sexual morality. *Circular 1/94* stressed that religious education was to make a major contribution to pupils' moral development (Department for Education 1994: paragraphs 4, 9 and 39). All religions have an ethical dimension that includes consideration of issues relating to sexual morality, and *Circular 1/94* recommended that pupils make their own responses to religions' responses to questions about 'morality and ethical standards' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4). Since *Circular 1/94* stated that at each key stage the content relating to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35), this chapter uses pupils' responses to Christian perspectives on sexual issues as measures of pupils' moral development. Since it is recognised that there is no Christian consensus of opinion on some issues, in the present research traditional interpretations of biblical teaching pupils' provide the basis for assessing moral attitude toward sexual morality. The government documents that have provided items for inclusion in the preceding scales of attitude are silent on issues of sexual morality.

The questionnaire used in the pupil survey contains 56 items relating to moral issues. The items have been grouped together to fit into five main categories of moral issues, namely, personal choices, sex, drugs, property and the environment. This chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale to measure pupils' moral attitudes toward sex. Secondly, it provides a profile of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward this aspect of their moral development. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the moral attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward sex-related issues. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' moral attitudes toward sexual issues. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Moral attitude toward sex: developing an attitude scale
This chapter assesses the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward sexual morality. From a pool of 12 items used in previous studies as measures of sexual

morality, rest of test correlations have identified 10 items that cohere to produce the best homogenous and unidimensional scale measuring moral attitude toward sexual issues. In order to ensure a uniform approach throughout, most items begin with the stem 'It is wrong to...'. Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. The 10 selected items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 14.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.8452 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 14.1 Moral attitude toward sex: scale properties

item	r
It is wrong to have sex under the legal age	0.5653
It is wrong to have an abortion	0.4345
It is wrong to have sex with a casual acquaintance	0.6651
It is wrong to have sex with lots of partners	0.6717
It is wrong for a married woman to have sex with another man	0.5720
It is wrong for a married man to have sex with another woman	0.6087
It is wrong to have sex before marriage	0.5212
Prostitution is wrong	0.5126
Divorce is wrong	0.4296
Pornography is wrong	0.4683
Alpha = 0.8452	

Moral attitude toward sex: profile of the whole sample

Table 14.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

Table 14.2 Moral attitude toward sex: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
It is wrong to have sex under the legal age	20	19	61
It is wrong to have an abortion	18	26	56
It is wrong to have sex with a casual acquaintance	17	30	53
It is wrong to have sex with lots of partners	24	26	50
It is wrong for a married woman to have sex with another man	49	24	28
It is wrong for a married man to have sex with another woman	48	24	28
It is wrong to have sex before marriage	6	11	83
Prostitution is wrong	36	33	31
Divorce is wrong	17	30	53
Pornography is wrong	32	30	38

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Table 14.2 shows that on issues of sexual morality, adultery is the issue that attracts the highest numbers of traditional, or conservative, views. Almost half the pupils consider that adultery is wrong, whether a married man is involved (48%) or a married woman (49%). Only 28% think it morally acceptable. In contrast, less than a quarter of the pupils (17%) think that divorce is wrong, and over half (53%) think it morally acceptable. The sympathetic attitude of most teenagers toward divorce may be explained by the possibility that they have observed at first-hand the difficulties experienced by parents in unhappy marriage situations.

On issues that are likely to affect pupils more directly, attitudes are mainly liberal. An overwhelming 83% of the pupils think it morally acceptable to have sex before marriage, compared with exceptionally few pupils (6%) who think it wrong. Most pupils have made up their minds on this issue - only 11% of the pupils are undecided. Three in five pupils (61%) think it is morally acceptable to have sex under the legal age, compared with just a fifth of the pupils (20%) who think it wrong. A fifth are undecided on this issue. There is less support for the view that having sex with a casual acquaintance is morally acceptable, yet still just over half the pupils (53%) consider it acceptable. Only 17% think it wrong, whilst a third (30%) (one of the

higher rates of uncertainty) are undecided. Similarly, half the pupils (50%) think it morally acceptable to have sex with lots of partners, whilst almost a quarter of the pupils (24%) consider it wrong, and a quarter (26%) are undecided. The figures relating to attitude toward abortion are very similar to these. Over half the pupils (56%) think it morally acceptable to have an abortion whilst only 18% think it wrong and 26% are undecided.

That the majority of these pupils consider it acceptable to have sex before marriage, under the legal age, with lots of partners and with casual acquaintances may offer some explanation for the fact that Cornwall has particularly high teenage conception rates. According to a government-sponsored report on teenage pregnancy (Social Exclusion Unit 1999), Cornwall's conception rates for girls under 18 years of age in 1997, a year after the present research survey of 13 to 15 year-old pupils, were in the second highest ten per cent in England. In this report the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, stated that 'Britain has the worst record on teenage pregnancies in Europe' (Social Exclusion Unit 1999: 4).

There are just two issues on which pupils' views are fairly evenly divided. On the question of pornography, just under a third of the pupils (32%) consider it wrong, a similar percentage (30%) are uncertain, and just over a third (38%) consider it morally acceptable. The balance swings slightly the other way on the issue of prostitution. Just over a third of the pupils (36%) believe that prostitution is wrong, 31% think it is morally acceptable and a third (33%) are unsure. These issues are the ones that, after the questions relating to adultery, elicit the highest numbers of expressions of disapproval, although only around a third of the pupils consider these activities wrong compared with almost a half who consider adultery wrong. On these last two issues the sample divides roughly into thirds, showing that there is greater diversity of opinion on these issues.

Comparing school approaches

Moral attitude toward sex: by school approach to religious education
Table 14.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward sex and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items

in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 14.3 compares the moral attitudes toward sex of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 14.3 Moral attitude toward sex: by school approach to religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	626	26.5	8.7
adequate	2149	26.8	8.4

F= 1.0, NS

Table 14.3 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' moral attitudes toward sex whether they are in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist or in schools where provision is adequate. The same proportions of pupils are equally likely to consider it wrong to have sex with lots of partners or to have an abortion, for example, whether they are in schools where they receive little religious education or adequate religious education. This suggests that the moral teachings of the religions taught in school are not likely to be the factors that influence pupils' moral choices in these areas.

Moral attitude toward sex: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 14.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward sex and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the teacher questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools in Cornwall Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 14.4 compares the moral attitudes toward sex of pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

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Table 14.4 Moral attitude toward sex: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	963	26.7	8.6
world religions	1812	26.3	8.4

F= 0.0, NS

Table 14.4 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' moral attitudes toward sex whether they are in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance or in schools where Christianity and other world religions are taught in equal measure. The same proportions of pupils are likely to consider it wrong to have sex before marriage, for example, or that pornography or prostitution is wrong, whether they are in schools where there is a focus on Christian moral stances and the ethics of the Old and New Testaments or in schools that study the moral teachings of all religions in equal measure.

Moral attitude toward sex: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 14.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward sex and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach.

Table 14.5 Moral attitude toward sex: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	697	26.9	8.4
separate	1169	26.9	8.5
mixed	909	26.5	8.5

F= 0.6, NS

Table 14.5 compares the moral attitudes toward sex of the pupils in schools where the approach is thematic, pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately, and pupils in schools where the approach is 'mixed'. Table 14.5 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' attitudes toward sex, whether the religions are taught thematically, independently of each other, or with a mixture of a thematic or 'separate' approach. This and the preceding tables suggest that factors other than religious education are responsible for pupils' attitudes toward sex.

Moral attitude toward sex: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 14.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward sex and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as taking a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as using an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 14.6 compares the moral attitude toward sex of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 14.6 Moral attitude toward sex: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1558	27.1	8.4
experiential	543	26.0	9.2
mixed	674	26.5	8.1

F= 3.4, P< .05

Table 14.6 suggests that pupils in schools that have a phenomenological approach to religious education are likely to have more traditionally conventional attitudes toward sexual morality than pupils in schools where there is an experiential approach, or a mixture of both approaches. Table 14.6 suggests that a teaching approach that seeks

to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences is less likely to encourage positive moral attitudes toward issues such as sex before marriage than an approach that focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions. This finding is surprising, since it would seem that an approach that encourages pupils to examine their own beliefs and values would be more likely to encourage positive moral attitudes than an approach that is objective and detached. Since a phenomenological approach is usually associated with a 'world religions' approach, a possible explanation may be that pupils are more sympathetic to the biblical 'Thou shalt not commit adultery', for example, when considered in the light of the moral teachings of other religions. It may also be that a critical, detached approach demonstrates that there is no desire on the part of the teacher to inculcate a sexual morality that is associated with traditional Christian values. It may also be that most pupils prefer an approach that does not link their own moral attitudes with teaching that might present a God who judges and punishes immoral behaviour.

School approaches and moral attitude toward sex: summary
The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward sex show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward sex whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or there is a 'world religions' approach, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to have positive attitudes toward questions of sexual morality than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. This suggests that pupils may have more positive attitudes toward Christian moral values if their religious education does not encourage them to consider their own moral values, particularly those that relate to questions of sexual morality. Overall, the data presented in the preceding tables suggest that for the most part, religious education has little influence on pupils' attitudes toward sexual issues. It seems that government desires for religious education to play an important role in pupils' moral development, at least in these areas, are unfulfilled.

Since the preceding data suggest that religious education is not a significant factor in influencing pupils' moral attitudes toward sex, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and moral attitude toward sex

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 14.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward sex and the sex of the pupils.

Table 14.7 Moral attitude toward sex: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1379	25.6	9.0
female	1391	27.9	7.8

F= 48.9, P< .001

Table 14.7 shows that the girls in the sample are likely to have significantly more traditional, conservative attitudes toward sexual morality than are the boys (P< .001). The boys are therefore likely to have more liberal attitudes than the girls toward adultery and divorce, for example, and toward having sex under the legal age, with a casual acquaintance, or with lots of partners. Other studies (see Francis and Kay 1995: 84, 85 and Francis 2000: 105) have found that teenage boys have the more liberal attitudes in most but not all of these aspects of sexual morality.

Church attendance and moral attitude toward sex

In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 14.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward sex and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 14.8 Moral attitude toward sex: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1625	25.5	8.3
sometimes	935	27.6	7.7
at least once a month	193	33.3	9.9

F= 85.6, P< .001

Table 14.8 shows that frequent churchgoing is likely to relate closely to positive moral attitudes toward sexual issues. The data show that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are more likely to have significantly more traditional, conservative attitudes toward sexual morality than those who sometimes attend (P< .001), and pupils who never attend are more likely to have liberal attitudes. Thus, pupils who attend church at least once a month are likely to consider it wrong to have sex before marriage, for example, and are likely to think that prostitution, and pornography are wrong. This suggests that the churches are making a significant contribution to the aspects of pupils' moral development that relate to sexual issues.

Academic expectations and moral attitude toward sex

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and moral attitude toward sex. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve only D-G grades in the GCSE examination, or no passes. A third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils. Table 14.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward sex and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 14.9 Moral attitude toward sex: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or more	407	26.7	9.0
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	898	27.1	8.3
5 or more GCSE A-C	769	26.1	8.0
1 to 2 A or AS level	623	26.8	8.9

F= 1.9, NS

Table 14.9 shows that intelligence is not a factor that influences moral attitude toward sex. Those who are the most academically able are no more likely to have more traditional, conservative attitudes toward sexual morality than the least academically able. This suggests that pupils are more likely to be influenced in their attitudes toward sexual morality by factors such as the frequently liberal attitudes of contemporary society, for example, or peer pressure, than by the ability to achieve high academic standards. A further explanation may be that intelligence is defined here in terms that relate primarily to cognitive development, whereas moral attitude may depend as much on feelings and emotions as to the rational mind.

Television viewing and moral attitude toward sex

As noted earlier, research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 14.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward sex and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on the specified day.

Table 14.10 Moral attitude toward sex: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	432	27.2	9.0
3 to 4 hours	1867	27.1	8.2
over 4 hours	471	25.1	9.0

F= 10.7, P< .001

Table 14.10 shows that pupils who watched television for over four hours are the least likely to have traditional, conservative attitudes toward sexual morality, whilst pupils who watched for less than one hour are the least likely to have liberal attitudes (P< .001). Thus, pupils who watched television for over four hours are the least likely to

think it wrong to have sex under the legal age, or with lots of partners, or with a casual acquaintance, for example. This may perhaps be attributed to the fact that data derived from elsewhere in the questionnaire show that the most frequently watched programmes are television 'soaps'. These are watched at least once a week by three-quarters of the pupils. These programmes focus on the relationships of the major characters, and tend to present liberal attitudes toward most issues of sexual morality. It is likely that television has a strong influence on the moral attitudes, particularly in relation to sexual morality, of those who watch it frequently.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward sex show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward sex whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or there is a 'world religions' approach, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to hold to traditional moral values in relation to sexual matters than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. Thus, it seems that pupils may have more positive attitudes toward Christian moral values if their religious education approaches the study of religions from a detached perspective, and does not encourage pupils to consider their own moral values. For the most part, it seems that government wishes for religious education to play an important role in pupils' moral development, at least in the areas itemised in this chapter, are unfulfilled.

In addition to this one teaching approach that is likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in moral attitude toward sex are pupils' own sex, church attendance and television viewing. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to have positive moral attitudes toward sexual issues, as are those pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month and those who watch television for less than an hour a day. Since a focus on teaching Christianity rather than teaching world religions equally makes no difference to pupils' attitudes toward sex, yet regular church attendance encourages positive attitudes, a religious education that invites Christians to contribute to religious education lessons, to discuss their moral views from Christian perspectives, might

make a significant contribution to pupils' moral development. Although the subject of Christian ethics frequently features in year ten or year eleven GCSE and general religious education courses, it seems that it is largely unsuccessful in promoting positive moral attitudes toward sexual issues.

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Chapter fifteen

Moral attitude toward drugs

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Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward drugs. *Circular 1/94* stressed that religious education was to make a major contribution to pupils' moral development (Department for Education 1994: paragraphs 4, 9 and 39). All the major religions have an ethical dimension that embraces the notion of personal holiness and the sanctity of human life, and offer guidance on ways of living that promote personal holiness. The New Testament refers to Christians as 'God's temple', in whom God's Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 3, 16, 17), and verses such as these provide the basis for the Christian moral attitude that to abuse the mind and body with drugs is wrong. *Circular 1/94* recommended that pupils make their own responses to religions' responses to questions about 'morality and ethical standards' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4). Since *Circular 1/94* states that at each key stage the content relating to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35), this chapter uses pupils' responses to Christian perspectives on the use of drugs as measures of pupils' moral development. The government documents (National Curriculum Council 1993a and OFSTED 1994) that have provided items for inclusion in some of the preceding scales of attitude offer none that relate to substance use, perhaps the reason being that they acknowledge that there is no moral consensus on drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes.

The questionnaire used in the pupil survey contains 56 items relating to moral issues. The items have been grouped together to fit into five main categories of moral issues, namely, personal choices, sex, drugs, property and the environment. This chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale to measure pupils' moral attitudes toward the use of drugs. Secondly, it provides a profile of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward the use of drugs. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the moral attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward the use of drugs. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' moral attitudes toward the use of drugs. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Moral attitude toward drugs: developing an attitude scale

This chapter assesses the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward the use of drugs. From a pool of ten items, item rest of test correlations have identified eight items that cohere to produce the best homogenous and unidimensional scale measuring moral attitude toward drugs. These include six items used in earlier studies (Francis and Mullen 1993, Francis and Kay 1995), with the addition of two items, 'It is wrong to buy cigarettes under the legal age' and 'It is wrong to buy alcoholic drinks under the legal age'. In order to ensure a uniform approach throughout, most items begin with the stem 'It is wrong to...'. Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. The eight items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 15.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.8723 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 15.1 Moral attitude toward drugs: scale properties

item	r
It is wrong to buy cigarettes under the legal age	0.6390
It is wrong to buy alcoholic drinks under the legal age	0.5831
It is wrong to sniff glue	0.6307
It is wrong to smoke marijuana	0.7274
It is wrong to become drunk	0.5123
It is wrong to sniff butane gas	0.6509
It is wrong to smoke cigarettes	0.6412
It is wrong to use heroin	0.6415

Alpha = 0.8723

Moral attitude toward drugs: profile of the whole sample

Table 15.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into

one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

Table 15.2 Moral attitude toward drugs: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
It is wrong to buy cigarettes under the legal age	37	20	43
It is wrong to buy alcoholic drinks under the legal age	29	20	52
It is wrong to sniff glue	60	21	19
It is wrong to smoke marijuana	38	21	41
It is wrong to become drunk	13	17	71
It is wrong to sniff butane gas	58	24	18
It is wrong to smoke cigarettes	25	20	56
It is wrong to use heroin	60	20	20

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Regarding attitudes toward the use of drugs, the most support is for considering it wrong to use what might be considered the most dangerous substances and the least support for what might be considered the least dangerous. Around three in every five pupils consider it wrong to sniff glue or butane gas, or use heroin, compared with only one in eight (13%) who consider it wrong to become drunk. Drunkenness may be morally acceptable to most because alcohol is seen to be socially acceptable, and is the substance most easily available to young people, over half of whom do not think it wrong to buy it when under the legal age. It is possible too that alcohol is considered the least addictive substance, with the least damaging long-term effects on the mind and body. With respect to legal constraints, more pupils consider it wrong to buy cigarettes under the legal age than to buy alcohol under the legal age. This may reflect behaviour rather than belief patterns. Around a quarter of the pupils are unsure on all of the issues.

Comparing school approaches

Moral attitude toward drugs: by school approach to religious education

Table 15.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward drugs and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 15.3 compares the moral attitudes toward drugs of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 15.3 Moral attitude toward drugs: by school approach to religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	626	23.9	7.8
adequate	2150	23.9	7.8

F= 0.0, NS

Table 15.3 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' attitudes toward the use of drugs whether they are in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist or in schools where provision is adequate. The same proportions of pupils are equally likely to consider it wrong to sniff glue or to smoke marijuana or cigarettes, for example, whether they are in schools where they receive little religious education or adequate religious education. This suggests that the moral teachings of the religions taught in school are not likely to be the factors that influence pupils' moral choices in these areas.

Moral attitude toward drugs: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 15.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward drugs and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the Cornwall teachers' questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7

schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 15.4 compares the moral attitudes toward drugs of pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 15.4 Moral attitude toward drugs: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	963	24.2	7.8
world religions	1813	23.7	7.8

F= 1.9, NS

Table 15.4 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' moral attitudes toward drugs whether they are in schools where the teaching of Christianity is given predominance or in schools where Christianity and other world religions are taught in equal measure. The same proportions of pupils are likely to consider it wrong to become drunk or use heroin, for example, whether they are in schools where there is a focus on Christian moral stances and the ethics of the Old and New Testaments or on the moral teachings of other religions. A possible explanation may be that the religions studied take similar stances on the issues relating to the use of drugs.

Moral attitude toward drugs: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 15.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward drugs and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 15.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward

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drugs and the way teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions.

Table 15.5 Moral attitude toward drugs: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	697	24.3	7.7
separate	1170	23.8	7.8
mixed	909	23.7	7.9

F= 1.3, NS

Table 15.5 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' attitudes toward the use of drugs, whether the religions are taught thematically, independently of each other, or with a mixture of a thematic or 'separate' approach. This and the preceding tables in this chapter suggest that factors other than religious education are responsible for pupils' attitudes toward the use of drugs.

Moral attitude toward drugs: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 15.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward drugs and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 15.6 compares the moral attitude toward drugs of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 15.6 Moral attitude toward drugs: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1559	24.2	7.8
experiential	543	23.0	8.2
mixed	674	23.8	7.3

F= 4.5, P< .05

Table 15.6 shows that pupils' attitudes toward drugs are more likely to be influenced by an objective, detached approach to studying the 'external' phenomena of religions than by an approach that seeks to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences. This is an unexpected finding, since it would seem that an approach that encourages pupils to examine their own beliefs and values would be the most likely to encourage an awareness of the dangers of using potentially harmful drugs. However, it may be that pupils prefer an approach that does not link their own moral attitudes with religious teachings. It may also be that a critical, detached approach demonstrates that there is no desire on the part of the teacher to inculcate a morality that is associated with unfashionable conservatism in matters relating to the use of drugs.

School approaches and moral attitude toward drugs: summary

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward drugs show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward drugs whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or there is a 'world religions' approach, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are less likely to have liberal attitudes toward the use of drugs than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. This suggests that pupils may have more positive attitudes toward Christian moral values if their religious education does not challenge them to consider their own moral values, particularly those that relate to questions of the use of drugs. Overall, the data presented in the preceding tables suggest that for the most part, religious education has little influence on pupils' attitudes toward the use of drugs. It seems that government desires for

religious education to play an important role in pupils' moral development, at least in these areas, are unfulfilled.

Since the preceding data suggest that religious education is not a significant factor in influencing pupils' moral attitudes toward the use of drugs, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and moral attitude toward drugs

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 15.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward the use of drugs that are potentially harmful and the sex of the pupils.

Table 15.7 Moral attitude toward drugs: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1379	24.0	8.2
female	1392	23.8	7.3

F= 0.7, NS

Table 15.7 shows that there is no significant difference between the girls' attitudes toward the use of drugs and those of the boys. The data suggest that other factors apart from sex are responsible for pupils' attitudes toward drugs. Other studies (Francis and Kay 1995: 113, 114, Francis 2001: 105, 106) have suggested that teenage girls are more likely than teenage boys to consider it wrong to sniff glue or butane gas, smoke marijuana or use heroin. The data presented in table 15.7 support these findings. However, the same two studies suggest that boys are more likely than girls to consider it wrong to smoke cigarettes, and that there is no significant difference between the sexes on attitudes toward being drunk. The data presented in table 15.7 do not concur with these findings. However, account must be taken of the fact that the other studies report on individual items, whereas the present study compares mean scores.

Church attendance and moral attitude toward drugs

In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 15.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward the use of drugs and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 15.8 Moral attitude toward drugs: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1626	22.9	7.9
sometimes	935	24.7	7.2
at least once a month	193	28.1	7.9

F= 48.3, P< .001

Table 15.8 shows that frequent churchgoing is likely to relate closely to an attitude that finds it wrong to use drugs. The data show that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are more likely to consider the use of drugs to be wrong than those who sometimes attend (P< .001), and pupils who never attend are more likely to condone the use of drugs. Thus, pupils who attend church at least once a month are likely to consider it wrong to get drunk, or to use heroin or to smoke marijuana, for example. These findings support the findings of the studies of Francis and Kay (1995) and Francis (2001), referred to earlier. Additionally, table 15.8 shows that frequent churchgoers are less likely to support the idea of buying cigarettes or alcoholic drinks under the legal age. The data presented in table 15.8 therefore suggest that churches are making a significant contribution to the aspects of pupils' moral development that relate to buying and using potentially harmful drugs.

Academic expectations and moral attitude toward drugs

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and moral attitudes toward the use of drugs. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve only D-G grades in the GCSE examinations, or no passes. A third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at

least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils. Table 15.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward the use of drugs and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 15.9 Moral attitude toward drugs: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	407	22.3	8.5
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	898	23.8	7.5
5 or more GCSE A-C	770	24.1	7.6
1 to 2 A or AS level	623	24.8	7.7

$F = 9.0$, $P < .001$

Table 15.9 shows that intelligence is a factor that significantly influences moral attitudes toward the use of drugs. Those who are the most academically able are more likely than the least academically able to consider the use of drugs to be wrong. Since intelligence is defined here in terms that relate primarily to cognitive development, the data presented in table 15.9 suggest that pupils may approach the issue of the use of drugs from rational rather than emotional perspectives. Pupils are likely to have been warned of the possible consequences of taking drugs, and may have decided that the dangers outweigh the possible benefits.

Television viewing and moral attitude toward drugs

As noted earlier, a number of research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 15.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward drugs and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on one particular day.

Table 15.10 Moral attitude toward drugs: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	432	24.3	8.3
3 to 4 hours	1868	24.2	7.5
over 4 hours	471	22.4	8.2

F= 10.1, P< .001

Table 15.10 shows that pupils who watched television for over four hours are the most likely to condone the use of potentially harmful drugs, whilst pupils who watched for less than one hour are the most likely to condemn the use of such drugs (P< .001). Thus, pupils who watched television for over four hours are the least likely to think it wrong to smoke cigarettes or marijuana, or to sniff glue or butane gas, for example. These findings concur with the findings of the Francis (2001: 196, 197) study of relationships between teenage television watching and the use of drugs. Additionally, pupils who watched television for over four hours are the most likely to condone buying cigarettes and alcohol under the legal age, whilst pupils who watched for less than one hour are the most likely to condemn such activities. It is difficult to understand why television should have this impact, since there is no evidence that the content of television programmes, including those most frequently watched by the highest proportions of pupils, the 'soaps', encourages the use of drugs. This suggests that, although the data suggest a relationship between television viewing and attitude toward the use of drugs, the differences in attitude between the groups of viewers may not be wholly attributable to the influence of television.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward drugs show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward drugs whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or there is a 'world religions' approach, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to hold to traditional moral values in relation to the use of drugs than pupils in schools where the approach is experiential. It seems that pupils may have more positive attitudes toward Christian moral values if their

religious education does not encourage them to consider their own moral values. For the most part, it seems that government desires for religious education to play an important role in pupils' moral development, at least in the areas itemised in this chapter, are unfulfilled.

In addition to these teaching approaches that are likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in moral attitude toward drugs are sex, church attendance and television viewing. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to consider it wrong to use drugs, as are those pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month and those who watch television for less than an hour a day. Since a phenomenological approach seems to have the most impact on attitudes toward the use of drugs, teachers of religious education might need to use the critical and evaluative approaches of the method to encourage teenage boys to consider more carefully the consequences of using drugs. If schools are to promote this aspect of pupils' moral development, it seems too that the use of suitable television material might help to promote positive attitudes.

Chapter sixteen

Moral attitude toward property

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Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward property. *Circular 1/94* stressed that religious education was to make a major contribution to pupils' moral development (Department for Education 1994: paragraphs 4, 9 and 39). All the major religions have an ethical dimension that relates to respect for others and for their possessions. The Old Testament ten commandments (Exodus chapter 20) include 'You shall not steal', and expand this to the concept of refraining from coveting any of a neighbour's belongings. In the New Testament theft is described as one of the evils that come out of the human heart (Mark 7:21), and states that thieves are among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6: 10). *Circular 1/94* recommended that pupils make their own responses to religions' responses to questions about 'morality and ethical standards' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4). Since *Circular 1/94* states that at each key stage the content relating to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35), this chapter uses pupils' responses to Christian perspectives on respect for property as measures of pupils' moral development. In this instance, a moral judgement is offered in a government-sponsored document. The National Curriculum Council (1993a) includes 'respecting the rights and property of others' in its list of absolute moral values.

The questionnaire used in the pupil survey contains 56 items relating to moral issues. The items have been grouped together to fit into five main categories of moral issues, namely, personal choices, sex, drugs, property and the environment. This chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale to measure pupils' moral attitudes toward property. Secondly, it provides an overview of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward property. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the moral attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward property. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' moral attitudes toward property. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Moral attitude toward property: developing an attitude scale

This chapter assesses the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward property. Nine items measure response to issues involving property. These items were found to cohere to produce a homogenous and unidimensional scale measuring moral attitude toward property. In order to ensure a uniform approach throughout, most items begin with the stem 'It is wrong to...'. Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. The nine items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 16.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.8611 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 16.1 Moral attitude toward property: scale properties

item	r
It is wrong to steal	0.6135
It is wrong to keep money you find	0.4571
It is wrong to borrow money you can't pay back	0.5325
It is wrong to buy stolen goods	0.6313
It is wrong to travel without a ticket	0.5540
It is wrong to write graffiti	0.5694
Shop lifting is wrong	0.6889
Joy riding is wrong	0.6119
Vandalism is wrong	0.6417

Alpha = 0.8611

Moral attitude toward property: profile of the whole sample

Table 16.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and

'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

Table 16.2 Moral attitude toward property: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
It is wrong to steal	79	12	9
It is wrong to keep money you find	23	33	44
It is wrong to borrow money you can't pay back	60	24	16
It is wrong to buy stolen goods	50	27	24
It is wrong to travel without a ticket	41	30	29
It is wrong to write graffiti	40	28	32
Shop lifting is wrong	65	19	16
Joy riding is wrong	69	16	15
Vandalism is wrong	69	18	13

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

In response to the general moral principle that stealing is wrong, almost four in every five pupils (79%) respond in the affirmative. Yet when the act of stealing is described in specific contexts, the percentages of pupils expressing disapproval of stealing are much smaller. Thus, 65% of the pupils think shop lifting is wrong, three in five pupils (60%) consider it wrong to keep money one can't pay back, only half the pupils consider it wrong to buy stolen goods, and even fewer to travel without a ticket (41%) or write graffiti (40%). These data suggest that whilst a very high proportion of pupils think that stealing is wrong, far fewer pupils see shop lifting or borrowing money you can't pay back as stealing, and even fewer pupils identify buying stolen goods, or travelling without a ticket, or keeping money you find, with stealing. In the cases of shop lifting and travelling without a ticket it may be that pupils consider that the victims of their actions will be unaware and little damaged by their actions. In the case of borrowing money you can't pay back there may be the feeling that one day the situation might be retrievable, or the friend might be affluent enough to spare the money, or might be willing to give the money. In the

case of buying stolen goods, or keeping money you find, there may be the feeling that the guilt is another's, and the recipient is innocent, or perhaps unaware.

Regarding damage to property, relatively high proportions of pupils consider joy riding and vandalism wrong (each 69%), compared with a small proportion of pupils (40%) who think writing graffiti is wrong. Perhaps this is because most graffiti are written on the walls of public buildings, so the damage is not to an individual's personal property. Further research might reveal the reasons why pupils' attitudes differ on different issues relating to property.

Comparing school approaches

Moral attitude toward property: by school approach to religious education
Table 16.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward property and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 16.3 compares the moral attitudes toward property of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 16.3 Moral attitude toward property: by school approach to religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	625	31.1	7.8
adequate	2144	31.5	7.6

F= 1.6, NS

Table 16.3 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' moral attitudes toward property whether they are in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist or in schools where provision is adequate. The same proportions of pupils are equally likely to consider it wrong to steal, or travel without a ticket, or write graffiti, for example, whether they are in schools where they receive little religious education or adequate religious education. This suggests that the moral

teachings of the religions taught in school are not likely to be the factors that influence pupils' moral choices relating to respect for others' property.

Moral attitude toward property: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 16.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward property and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the teacher questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools in Cornwall Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 16.4 compares the moral attitudes toward drugs of pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 16.4 Moral attitude toward property: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	962	32.1	7.8
world religions	1807	31.0	7.6

F= 11.5, P< .001

Table 16.4 suggests that pupils in schools where there is a greater focus on Christian and Bible-based ethics are likely to have a higher regard for others' property than pupils who are taught in schools where the ethics of a number of different religions are considered in equal measure and in terms of equal validity. The data from other parts of the questionnaire show that almost all pupils are familiar with the ten commandments. Equally, almost all are aware of the main events of Jesus' life, including the crucifixion. The data presented in table 16.4 may suggest that the commandments not to steal and not to covet others'property, taught in the context of

a syllabus that focuses on the themes of Christian love and self-sacrifice encourages positive attitudes toward others' property.

Moral attitude toward property: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 16.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward property and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 16.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward property and the way teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions.

Table 16.5 Moral attitude toward property: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	696	31.3	7.3
separate	1166	31.5	7.7
mixed	907	31.3	7.9

F= 0.2, NS

Table 16.5 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' attitudes toward property, whether the religions are taught thematically, independently of each other, or with a mixture of a thematic or 'separate' approach. These data suggest that factors other than this approach to religious education are responsible for pupils' attitudes toward property.

Moral attitude toward property: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 16.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward property and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 16.6 compares the moral attitude toward property of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 16.6 Moral attitude toward property: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1554	31.7	7.6
experiential	541	30.0	8.2
mixed	674	31.9	7.3

F= 11.6, P< .001

Table 16.6 suggests that the pupils in schools where there is a mixture of both approaches are likely to have greater respect for others' property than pupils in schools where the approach is phenomenological, and pupils in schools where the approach is experiential are likely to have less respect for others' property. Thus, pupils' attitudes toward property are more likely to be influenced by an objective, detached approach to studying the 'external' phenomena of religions than by an approach that seeks to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences. This is an unexpected finding, since it would seem that an approach that encourages pupils to examine their own beliefs and values would be the most likely to encourage positive attitudes toward others' property. However, it may be

that pupils prefer an approach that does not link their own moral attitudes with religious teachings. It may also be that a critical, detached approach demonstrates that there is no desire on the part of the religious education teacher to inculcate moral values.

School approaches and moral attitude toward property: summary

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward property show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward property whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where Christianity is taught 'in the main' or where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward others' property than pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach or experiential approach. This suggests that although the main influences on pupils' attitudes toward property cannot be attributed to their religious education, since it makes no difference whether they have received adequate religious education or not, two particular approaches to the subject appear to make a difference. Pupils may have more positive attitudes toward others' property if there is a focus on the moral teachings of the Christian faith rather than of a number of religions. Additionally, pupils may have more positive attitudes toward others' property if there is no attempt to link their own moral values with religion.

Since the preceding data suggest that provision for religious education is not a significant factor in influencing pupils' moral attitudes toward property, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and moral attitude toward property

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 16.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward property and the sex of the pupils.

Table 16.7 Moral attitude toward property: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1373	30.6	8.6
female	1391	32.2	6.6

F= 32.6, P< .001

Table 16.7 shows that the girls are likely to have more respect for others' property than are the boys (P< .001). The items relating to shop-lifting, travelling without a ticket and writing graffiti were included in the Francis and Kay study (1995: 99, 100). In that study the percentages of girls who considered it wrong to indulge in these activities were higher than the percentages of the boys who considered it wrong. In the present study, table 16.7 suggests that girls are more likely than boys to consider these activities wrong, and similarly that stealing, joy riding and vandalism, for example, are wrong. Table 16.7 suggests that in all of the scale items demonstrating attitude toward property included in the scale, it is the girls rather than the boys who are likely to have more respect for others' property.

Church attendance and moral attitude toward property

In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month. Table 16.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward property and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 16.8 Moral attitude toward property: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1622	30.3	8.0
sometimes	932	32.7	6.5
at least once a month	193	34.6	8.3

F= 47.4, P< .001

Table 16.8 shows that frequent churchgoing is likely to relate to a positive attitude toward property. The data show that pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month are likely to have significantly more positive attitudes toward others' property than those who sometimes attend (P< .001), and pupils who

never attend are likely to have more negative attitudes. As noted above, the items relating to shop-lifting, travelling without a ticket and writing graffiti were included in the Francis and Kay study (1995: 99, 100). In that study the percentages of frequent churchgoers who considered it wrong to indulge in these activities were higher than those of the non-churchgoers. In the present study, table 16.8 suggests that pupils who attend church at least once a month are more likely than pupils who never attend to consider these activities wrong. Similarly, these same pupils are likely to consider it wrong to keep money they find, or borrow money they can't pay back, or buy stolen goods, for example. Table 16.7 suggests that in all of the illustrations of attitude toward property included in the scale, it is the pupils who attend church regularly rather than those who never attend who are likely to have more respect for others' property. The data presented in table 16.8 suggest that churches are making a significant contribution to the aspects of pupils' moral development that relate to others' property.

Academic expectations and moral attitude toward property

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and moral attitude toward property. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve at best D-G grades in the GCSE examinations, a third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The proportion of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than those of the average pupils or academically gifted pupils.

Table 16.9 Moral attitude toward property: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	405	29.6	8.8
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	896	31.1	7.5
5 or more GCSE A-C	769	31.9	7.3
1 to 2 A or AS level	621	32.4	7.2

F= 12.6, P< .001

Table 16.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward property and the academic expectations of the pupils. Table 16.9 shows that intelligence is a factor that significantly influences moral attitudes toward property. Those who are the most academically able are likely to have more positive moral attitudes toward others' property than the least academically able. Since intelligence is defined here in terms that relate primarily to cognitive development, the data presented in table 16.9 suggest that pupils attitudes toward others' property are influenced by rational rather than emotional approaches.

Television viewing and moral attitude toward property

As noted earlier, a number of research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 16.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward property and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on the specified day.

Table 16.10 Moral attitude toward property: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	431	32.1	8.4
3 to 4 hours	1864	31.8	7.2
over 4 hours	469	29.3	8.4

F= 22.3, P< .001

Table 16.10 shows that pupils who watched television for over four hours are the most likely to have positive attitudes toward others' property, whilst pupils who watched for less than one hour are the least likely to have positive attitudes toward others' property (P< .001). Thus, pupils who watched television for over four hours are the least likely to think it wrong to steal or to travel without a ticket or to write

graffiti, for example. A number of research studies have connected television viewing with various kinds of anti-social behaviour (see Francis 2001: 181, 182). The data presented in table 16.10 appear to support such findings.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward property show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward property whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, or whether schools teach religions separately or thematically. However, pupils in schools where Christianity is taught 'in the main' or where the approach is phenomenological are more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward others' property than pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach or experiential approach. This suggests that although the main influences on pupils' attitudes toward property cannot be attributed to their religious education, since it makes no difference whether they have received adequate religious education or not, two particular approaches to the subject appear to make a difference. Pupils may have more positive attitudes toward others' property if there is a focus on the moral teachings of the Christian faith rather than of a number of religions. Additionally, pupils may have more positive attitudes toward others' property if there is no attempt to link their own moral values with religion.

In addition to these teaching approaches that are likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in moral attitude toward property are sex, church attendance, academic expectations and television viewing. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to have positive moral attitudes toward property, as are those pupils who attend church or other place of worship at least once a month, those who are the most academically able, and those who watch television for less than an hour a day. If schools are to seek to promote this aspect of pupils' moral development, teachers of religious education might focus on finding ways of encouraging the less academically able teenage boys to engage with the property-related aspects of Christian moral teaching.

Chapter seventeen

Moral attitude toward environmental issues

Overview

This chapter sets out to assess the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward environmental issues. *Circular 1/94* stressed that religious education was to make a major contribution to pupils' moral development (Department for Education 1994: paragraphs 4, 9 and 39). All the major religions have an ethical dimension that relates to respect for the environment. Christian perspectives on this topic derive largely from the Genesis account of God's command to man and woman to 'fill the earth and subdue it', and to rule over all living creatures (Genesis 1: 28). Although this command has been cited as the cause of human exploitation of the earth's resources (see Fox 1991), it is understood by conservative Christians to call for wise stewardship and care for the land and all its occupants (see Atkinson and Field 1995: 350, 351). *Circular 1/94* recommended that pupils make their own responses to religions' responses to questions about 'morality and ethical standards' (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 4). Since *Circular 1/94* states that at each key stage the content relating to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate (Department for Education 1994: paragraph 35), this chapter uses pupils' responses to Christian perspectives on respect for the environment, including animal life, as measures of pupils' moral development. The National Curriculum Council (1993a) makes no reference to environmental issues in its recommendations of 'absolute moral vales', merely mentioning 'blood sports' as an issue on which views may differ.

The questionnaire used in the pupil survey contains 56 items relating to moral issues. The items have been grouped together to fit into five main categories of moral issues, namely, personal choices, sex, drugs, property and the environment. This chapter first describes the development of an attitude scale to measure pupils' moral attitudes toward environmental issues. Secondly, it provides an overview of the attitudes of all pupils in the sample toward the environment. Thirdly, having categorised schools according to their particular approaches to religious education, the chapter assesses the impact of different school approaches on the moral attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward the environment. Fourthly, the chapter examines the influence of other factors on pupils' moral attitudes toward environmental issues. The chapter concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications for classroom practice.

Analysing the data

Moral attitude toward environmental issues: developing an attitude scale

This chapter assesses the attitudes of year nine and year ten pupils toward environmental issues. Since the Bible offers few specific examples relating to care for the environment, in this instance the text-books dealing with Christian ethics and most commonly used in the schools at the time of the survey were used to provide items to measure pupils' attitudes toward environmental issues. From a pool of seven items, item rest of test correlations have identified six items that cohere to produce a homogenous and unidimensional scale measuring moral attitude toward environmental issues. In order to ensure a uniform approach throughout, most items begin with the stem 'It is wrong to...'. Pupils' responses to each statement are assessed according to the Likert system of scoring items. Pupils are asked to respond to each statement on a five point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' and 'agree' through 'not certain' to 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly'. The six items, together with the item rest of test correlation coefficients, are presented in table 17.1. The scale achieves the highly satisfactory alpha coefficient of 0.8783 (Cronbach 1951).

Table 17.1 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: scale properties

item	r
It is wrong to use animals for experiments	0.6472
It is wrong to hunt animals for sport	0.6001
It is wrong to let the poor countries starve	0.6174
It is wrong to destroy the rain forests	0.7784
It is wrong to pollute the atmosphere	0.7871
It is wrong to waste the earth's resources	0.7225

Alpha = 0.8783

Moral attitude toward environmental issues: profile of the whole sample

Table 17.2 presents the proportions of pupils who express agreement, disagreement or uncertainty with each of the individual items. For clarity of presentation the 'agree' and 'agree strongly' responses on the five point Likert-type scale are collapsed into

one category expressed as 'Yes'. Similarly, the 'disagree' and 'disagree strongly' responses are collapsed into one category expressed as 'No'. The 'not certain' responses are expressed as '?'.

Table 17.2 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: percentage endorsements

item	Yes %	? %	No %
It is wrong to use animals for experiments	71	14	15
It is wrong to hunt animals for sport	68	14	18
It is wrong to let the poor countries starve	64	19	17
It is wrong to destroy the rain forests	79	11	10
It is wrong to pollute the atmosphere	78	13	9
It is wrong to waste the earth's resources	73	17	10

Note: Not all rows add up to 100%, since percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Table 17.2 shows a higher proportion of positive responses than do any of the preceding tables on moral issues. Over 70% of the pupils score positively on four of the six items. Almost four in five pupils think it is wrong to destroy the rain forests and it is wrong to pollute the atmosphere. Almost three-quarters of the pupils think it is wrong to waste the earth's resources and to use animals for experiments. Thus, a large majority of pupils have very definite views on the need to protect the environment from damage. Reasons for these findings may stem from the fact that these issues are less likely than those related to sex or drugs, for example, to impinge upon pupils' personal freedom. Yet they are issues about which pupils may feel strongly since pupils may be aware of the need to preserve the planet for the sake of their own futures. There is slightly less enthusiasm for considering it wrong to hunt animals for sport, perhaps because fox hunting is well supported in Cornwall. What is more puzzling is that fewer pupils (though still 64%) consider it wrong to allow poor countries to starve. Again, the reason may be that it is an issue that is unlikely to affect pupils personally.

Comparing school approaches

Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by school approach to religious education

Table 17.3 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward environmental issues and schools' provision for religious education. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 5 schools as minimalist in their approach to religious education, the remainder (18) as adequate in their approach. Table 16.3 compares the moral attitudes toward environmental issues of pupils in schools where the approach is minimalist, and pupils in schools where provision is adequate.

Table 17.3 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by school approach to religious education

	N	mean	sd
minimalist	627	23.7	6.6
adequate	2149	24.0	6.0

$F = 1.5$, NS

Table 17.3 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' moral attitudes toward environmental issues whether they are in schools where provision for religious education is minimalist or in schools where provision is adequate. The same proportions of pupils are equally likely to consider it wrong to destroy the rain forests or hunt animals for sport, for example, whether they are in schools where they receive little religious education or adequate religious education. This suggests that the moral teachings of the religions taught in school are not likely to be the factors that influence pupils' moral choices relating to respect for the environment.

Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

Table 17.4 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward environmental issues and the way schools balance teaching Christianity against teaching other religions. The 1988 Education Reform Act

required that Christianity be taught 'in the main', yet a review of post-1988 agreed syllabuses (National Curriculum Council 1993b) showed that few indicated that Christianity would be given priority. Responses to items in the teacher questionnaire suggested that in the majority of schools in Cornwall Christianity was not given predominance. In all, 7 schools were identified as having an 'in the main Christian' approach and 16 schools as having a 'world religions' approach. Table 17.4 compares the moral attitudes toward environmental issues of pupils in schools where the approach is 'in the main Christian', and pupils in schools where there is a 'world religions' approach.

Table 17.4 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by 'Christianity in the main' or a 'world religions' approach

	N	mean	sd
mainly Christianity	963	24.0	5.9
world religions	1813	23.9	6.3

F= 0.2, NS

Table 17.4 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' attitudes toward environmental issues, whether the teaching of Christianity is given predominance or whether Christianity and other world religions are taught in equal measure. As noted above, there is very little teaching in the Christian faith on specific environmental issues. This may be so of other religions. If this is so, pupils' attitudes toward environmental issues are likely to be shaped by other influences.

Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by religions taught thematically or separately

Table 17.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward environmental issues and the method by which teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions. In some schools the predominant approach to religious education is that of studying themes across a number of religions. In other schools the approach is that of studying each religion separately. Some schools use one approach in one year, for example, and a different approach in another year – a 'mixed' approach. Responses to items in the teachers'

questionnaire identified 5 schools as thematic in their approach to religious education, 10 schools as systematic in their approach, and 8 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 16.5 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward property and the way teachers deal with the requirement that pupils must learn about a number of religions.

Table 17.5 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by religions taught thematically or separately

	N	mean	sd
thematic	698	23.9	5.9
separate	1169	24.3	6.1
mixed	909	23.5	6.5

$F= 4.7, P< .05$

Table 17.5 shows that pupils in schools where the religions are taught separately are more likely to be concerned about environmental issues than pupils in schools where the religions are taught thematically, and pupils in schools where there is a mixture of approaches are the least likely to have positive attitudes. This suggests that an approach that focuses on one religion's ethical perspectives at a time is more likely to care for the environment than an approach that follows a particular environmental issue across a number of religions.

Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

Table 17.6 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward environmental issues and schools' general approaches to teaching religious education. In some schools the teaching approach focuses on the 'external' phenomena of religions, in other schools the approach is that of seeking to link aspects of religious teaching or experience with pupils' experiences, and may include encouraging pupils to be aware of their own potential for spiritual experience, whether religious or otherwise. In some schools there is a mixture of both approaches. Responses to items in the teachers' questionnaire identified 13 schools as having a phenomenological approach to religious education, 6 schools as having an

experiential approach, and 4 as having a 'mixed' approach. Table 17.6 compares the moral attitude toward environmental issues of the pupils in these three different categories of schools.

Table 17.6 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by religions taught phenomenologically or experientially

	N	mean	sd
phenomenological	1558	24.1	6.2
experiential	544	23.4	6.9
mixed	674	24.1	5.3

F= 2.5, NS

Table 17.6 shows that there is no significant difference in pupils' attitudes toward environmental issues, whether pupils are encouraged to engage with these issues in the light of religions' attitudes toward the environment, or whether they study the latter from detached, observational perspectives. This supports the earlier finding (see table 17.3) that suggests that other factors apart from religious education are responsible for pupils' attitudes toward environmental issues.

School approaches and moral attitude toward environmental issues: summary

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward environmental issues show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward environmental issues whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or there is a 'world religions' approach, or whether the approach is phenomenological or experiential. However, pupils in schools that teach religions separately are more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward environmental issues than pupils in schools where the approach is thematic. This suggests that although the main influences on pupils' attitudes toward environmental issues cannot be attributed to their religious education, since it makes no difference whether they have received adequate religious education or not, one particular approach to the subject appears to make a difference. Pupils may feel more protective toward the environment and toward animals if the religions are taught separately. This suggests that a thematic approach may reveal differences in religious

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perspectives that may lead to uncertainty or negative attitudes on the part of the pupils.

Since the preceding data suggest that religious education is not a significant factor in influencing pupils' moral attitudes toward the environment, the following sections will consider other possible influences.

Other influences

Sex differences and moral attitude toward environmental issues

In the present sample the numbers of teenage boys and girls are almost exactly equal, 50.5% being boys, 49.5% girls. Table 17.7 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward environmental issues and the sex of the pupils.

Table 17.7 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by sex differences

	N	mean	sd
male	1380	22.6	6.7
female	1391	25.3	5.3

$F= 145.2, P< .001$

These data demonstrate that the girls are likely to have a significantly more caring attitude toward environmental issues than are the boys ($P< .001$). Table 17.2 shows that very high percentages of pupils care about environmental issues. Table 17.7 suggests that girls are more likely than boys to think it wrong to destroy the rain forests, pollute the atmosphere, and waste the earth's resources, for example. and use animals for experiments. Table 17.7 suggests that in all of the scale items demonstrating attitude toward environmental issues, the girls are likely than the boys to express care and concern for animals and the environment.

Church attendance and moral attitude toward environmental issues

In the present sample three in every five pupils (60%) never attend church or other place of worship, 33% attend occasionally, and 7% attend at least once a month.

Table 17.8 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward environmental issues and the church attendance of the pupils.

Table 17.8 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by church attendance

	N	mean	sd
never	1626	23.4	6.5
sometimes	935	24.8	5.7
at least once a month	193	24.7	5.1

$F= 15.3$, $P< .001$

Table 17.8 shows that pupils who attend church or other place of worship sometimes or at least once a month are likely to have significantly more positive attitudes toward environmental issues than those who never attend ($P< .001$). Thus, pupils who attend church sometimes or at least once a month are more likely to consider it wrong to let the poor countries starve, or pollute the atmosphere, or waste the earth's resources, for example, than pupils who never attend. Additionally, table 17.8 shows that occasional or frequent churchgoers are more likely than those who never attend church to think using animals for experiments or hunting animals for sport is wrong. The data presented in table 17.8 suggest that churches are making a significant contribution to the aspects of pupils' moral development that relate to environmental issues.

Academic expectations and moral attitude toward environmental issues

The present research defines intelligence in terms of academic ability, and explores the relationship between intelligence and moral attitude toward environmental issues. Pupils participating in the survey were asked to indicate the grades that they expected to achieve in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. In the whole sample, 16% of the pupils expect to achieve at best D-G grades, a third of the pupils (33%) expect 1 to 4 A-C grades, 29% expect 5 or more A-C grades, and just over a fifth of the pupils (22%) expect at least one A or AS level pass. The percentage of less able pupils in the sample is thus significantly smaller than the percentages of the average or academically gifted pupils. Table 17.9 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward environmental issues and the academic expectations of the pupils.

Table 17.9 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by academic expectations

	N	mean	sd
GCSE D-G or less	408	21.6	7.2
1 to 4 GCSE A-C	898	24.2	6.3
5 or more GCSE A-C	769	24.5	5.6
1 to 2 A or AS level	623	24.6	5.3

F=25.4, P< .001

Table 17.9 shows that intelligence, defined in terms of academic expectations, is a factor that significantly influences moral attitudes toward environmental issues. Those who are the most academically able are likely to have more positive attitudes toward environmental issues than the least academically able (P< .001). Since intelligence is defined here in terms that relate primarily to cognitive development, the data presented in table 17.9 suggest that pupils' attitudes toward environmental issues are more likely to be shaped by knowledge and understanding than emotion. Even so, the very high proportions of pupils who have positive attitudes toward all the items included in the scale of attitude suggest that pupils feel strongly about the particular issues raised.

Television viewing and moral attitude toward environmental issues

As noted earlier, a number of research studies have suggested that television is the most popular home-based leisure activity for teenagers. Pupils participating in the present survey were asked on how many days they had watched television in the previous week, and how many hours of television they had watched on the previous Wednesday. Three-quarters of the sample had watched television on almost all days, and on the specified day just one in six pupils (16%) watched for less than an hour, two-thirds of the pupils (68%) watched for between one and four hours, and another one in six pupils (17%) watched for over four hours. Table 17.10 examines the relationship between scores recorded on the scale of moral attitude toward environmental issues and the hours spent by pupils in watching television on the specified day.

Table 17.10 Moral attitude toward environmental issues: by television viewing

	N	mean	sd
less than 1 hour	432	23.9	6.5
3 to 4 hours	1868	24.2	5.9
over 4 hours	471	23.1	6.9

F= 5.6, P< .01

Table 17.10 shows that pupils who watched television for three to four hours are the most likely to have positive attitudes toward environmental issues, whilst pupils who watched for less than one hour are the least likely to have positive attitudes toward environmental issues (P< .01). A number of research studies have connected television viewing with various kinds of anti-social behaviour (see Francis 2001: 181, 182). In the present study, pupils who watched television for over four hours are the least likely to think it wrong to destroy the rain forests, pollute the atmosphere, or hunt animals for sport, for example. Yet pupils who watched television for three to four hours, a relatively high number of hours, are the most likely to express care for the environment. It appears that there has been little research into the relationship between television viewing and attitude toward environmental issues. The data presented in table 17.10 provide apparently contradictory findings, suggesting that there is a need for further research in this particular area.

Conclusion

The data relating to school approaches and moral attitude toward environmental issues show that pupils are unlikely to differ in their moral attitudes toward environmental issues whether schools make adequate or minimal provision for religious education, whether Christianity is taught 'in the main' or there is a 'world religions' approach, or whether the approach is phenomenological or experiential. However, pupils in schools that teach religions separately are more likely to have positive moral attitudes toward environmental issues than pupils in schools where the approach is thematic. This suggests that although the main influences on pupils' attitudes toward environmental issues cannot be attributed to their religious education, since it makes no difference whether they have received adequate religious education or not, one particular approach to the subject appears to make a difference. Pupils may feel more

protective toward the environment and toward animals if the religions are taught separately. As suggested earlier, a thematic approach may reveal differences in religious attitudes that lead to uncertainty or negative attitudes on the part of the pupils.

In addition to this one teaching approach that is likely to make a difference, other factors that are likely to contribute to differences in moral attitude toward environmental issues are sex, church attendance, academic expectations and television viewing. Teenage girls are more likely than boys to have positive moral attitudes toward environmental issues, as are those pupils who attend church or other place of worship sometimes or at least once a month, those who are the most academically able, and those who watch television for three to four hours a day. If schools are to seek to promote this aspect of pupils' moral development, teachers of religious education need to focus upon finding ways of encouraging positive attitudes, particularly in the case of less academically able boys, toward the environmental issues identified in the attitude scale presented in this chapter. Since watching television is a major leisure activity for the majority of pupils, it seems that television programmes that promote positive moral attitudes toward environmental issues can be a valuable resource for religious education.

Conclusion

Research question

The present research set out to compare the impact of different approaches to religious education on the spiritual and moral development of year nine and year ten pupils in non-denominational state-maintained secondary schools. It did so in the context of government pressures on the schools of the mid-1990s to provide for all pupils a religious education that made a significant contribution to their spiritual and moral development, with an emphasis on the moral. The government was of the opinion that schools were failing in this matter. The present study therefore set out first, to discover and describe the kinds of religious education that were being delivered in secondary schools and secondly, to consider whether government criticisms were justified.

Method

A review of the relevant literature theoretically identified eight different approaches to secondary school religious education. A questionnaire was devised with the aim of categorising schools according to their particular approach to religious education. It was completed by the head of religious education in each of the 31 non-denominational state-maintained secondary schools in Cornwall, and resulted in each school being categorised according to its provision for religious education, the content of religious education lessons, and the teaching methods used.

A further literature review identified items that could be used as measures of pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes. The items were taken from government-sponsored documents offering schools guidance in this area, from a range of literature pertaining to Christian spirituality and morality, from school text-books on Christian ethics, and from previous research relevant to the research question. The focus on Christianity stemmed from the legal requirement for Christianity to be taught 'in the main'. A second questionnaire was devised with the aim of discovering pupils' knowledge of religious education content, teaching approaches they had experienced, and their spiritual and moral attitudes. The questionnaire was piloted in one school, then completed by 3,090 year nine and year ten pupils in 23 of the 31 secondary schools.

The pupils' responses have provided both a profile of the spiritual and moral attitudes of the whole sample and, by being developed into attitude scales, have enabled an examination of the relationships between pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes and their school's approaches to religious education. The main focus of the present research has been on the latter of these two outcomes. However, since the data have shown that few approaches to religious education have made significant differences to pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes, the present research has looked for other factors that might influence pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes, namely, pupils'sex, frequency of church attendance, academic expectations, and television viewing.

Summary of results

In the present research spiritual development is measured in terms of pupils' attitudes toward religious education, self-esteem, non-religious spiritual experience, Christian spiritual experience, and Christianity in general, and acceptance of Christian beliefs. Moral development is measured in terms of pupils' attitudes toward personal choices, sex, drugs, property and environmental issues. Each of the chapters through 7 to 17 focuses on one of the aspects of spiritual or moral interest listed above. Each chapter first presents the scale properties and a profile of the spiritual and moral attitudes of the whole sample, then examines the school factors that are likely to contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes, then other factors that that are likely to influence pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes. The mean scores of the pupils' attitudinal responses are compared, first in the context of the schools' approaches to religious education and then in the light of other possible influences. Although this method of working does not prove causation, since other factors may influence attitudes more strongly, it does show where there is a likelihood of school influence. The following paragraphs summarise the findings of chapters 7 to 17.

Regarding religious education, at least half of the pupils have negative rather than positive attitudes toward 9 of the 12 items, with as many as three-quarters of the pupils considering that religious education plays no part in helping them to lead a better life. Of the school approaches, a phenomenological as opposed to an experiential approach is the only approach likely to influence pupils positively toward their religious education. Other approaches make no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' attitudes toward religious

education, teenage girls who attend church at least once a month, have high academic expectations, and watch little television are likely to have the most positive attitudes.

Regarding self-esteem, an item regarded in government documents as an indicator of non-religious spiritual development, over half of the pupils express high self-esteem in response to three-quarters (18) of the 25 items in the attitude scale, and some of the percentages of positive responses are exceptionally high. For example, 85% of the pupils think they are fun to be with, and 75% think they are popular with kids their own age. The schools most likely to encourage high self-esteem are those that provide adequate religious education, teach Christianity 'in the main', and teach the religions separately, either wholly, or for at least part of the time. Whether the approach is phenomenological or experiential makes no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' self-esteem, teenage boys who have high academic expectations, and watch little television are likely to have the highest self-esteem.

Regarding secular spiritual experience, at least half of the pupils respond negatively to all 10 items. Of the school approaches, a minimalist approach is the only approach likely to have any influence on attitudes. Other approaches make no significant difference. It seems that religious education plays no part in helping pupils to 'sense a power beyond themselves' in secular contexts such as appreciating the beauty of the natural world. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' attitudes toward secular spiritual experience, teenage girls who attend church at least once a month are the most likely to have positive attitudes. Neither academic expectations nor television viewing are likely to influence attitudes toward secular spiritual experience.

Regarding Christian spiritual experience, at least half of the pupils have negative attitudes toward all 8 items. Of the school approaches, a minimalist approach is most likely to encourage positive attitudes. It seems that religious education plays no part in helping pupils to 'sense a power beyond themselves' in Christian contexts. However, of the religious education that is provided, a phenomenological approach is the most likely to encourage positive attitudes toward the kinds of spiritual experience that may take place in a church setting, for example. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' attitudes, teenage girls who attend church at least once a

month are the most likely to have positive attitudes toward Christian spiritual experience. Neither academic expectations nor television viewing are likely to influence attitudes.

Regarding Christianity in general, at least half of the pupils have negative attitudes toward 17 of the 24 items. As many as 71% of the pupils consider that the church is not important to them. Of the school approaches, a 'world religions' approach and a phenomenological approach are the two approaches the most likely to encourage positive attitudes toward Christianity. Other approaches make no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' attitudes toward Christianity, teenage girls who attend church at least once a month and watch little television are the most likely to have positive attitudes toward Christianity. Intelligence, expressed in terms of academic expectations, is not an influential factor.

Regarding Christian belief, at least half the pupils respond negatively to 7 of the 15 statements of belief. This does not, however, mean that responses to the remaining 8 statements are mainly positive. The percentages of positive responses to all items are very small. All items draw between 29% and 38% 'not certain' responses. Of the school approaches, a minimalist approach is most likely to encourage positive responses. This suggests that religious education is unlikely to play a part in helping pupils to accept Christian beliefs. However, of the religious education that is provided, a phenomenological approach is the most likely to encourage positive responses concerning Christian beliefs. Other approaches make no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' acceptance of Christian beliefs, teenage girls who attend church at least once a month and watch little television are the most likely to have respond positively to statements of Christian belief. Intelligence, expressed in terms of academic expectations, is not an influential factor. These findings correspond closely with those relating to attitude toward Christianity.

Regarding personal moral choices, at least half of the pupils have permissive attitudes toward 4 of the 8 items, whilst just over half express a positive moral attitude with regard to just one item, namely that of playing truant from school. Of the school approaches, a phenomenological approach is the only one that is likely to encourage

positive moral attitudes toward personal choices. Other approaches make no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' moral attitudes toward personal choices, teenage girls who attend church at least once a month and watch little television are the most likely to have positive moral attitudes in relation to personal choices. Intelligence, expressed in terms of academic expectations, is not an influential factor.

Regarding sexual morality, at least half of the pupils express negative moral attitudes with regard to 6 of the 10 items, an exceptionally high percentage (83%) regarding it as morally permissable to have sex before marriage. No item draws positive responses from as many as half of the pupils. Of the school approaches, a phenomenological approach as opposed to an experiential approach is the only one that is likely to encourage positive moral attitudes toward sexual issues. Other approaches make no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' moral attitudes toward sex, teenage girls who attend church at least once a month and watch little television are the most likely to have positive moral attitudes toward sex. Intelligence, expressed in terms of academic expectations, is not an influential factor.

Regarding the use of potentially harmful drugs, 3 of the 8 items draw positive moral responses from at least half of the pupils, whilst a further 3 items draw negative moral responses from at least half. As many as 71% consider it morally permissable to become drunk. Of the school approaches, a phenomenological approach as opposed to an experiential approach is the only one that is likely to encourage positive moral attitudes toward the use of drugs. Other approaches make no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' moral attitudes toward drugs, teenagers who attend church at least once a month, have high academic expectations, and watch little television are the most likely to have positive moral attitudes with respect to the use of potentially harmful drugs. This is the only instance where the sex of the pupils is not an influential factor.

Regarding other people's property, at least half of the pupils express positive moral attitudes with regard to 6 of the 9 items, with as many as 79% of the pupils thinking it wrong to steal. Of the school approaches, those that teach Christianity 'in the main'

and those that teach by means of a mixture of phenomenological and experiential approaches, are likely to encourage positive moral attitudes toward others' property. Other approaches make no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' moral attitudes toward property, teenage girls who attend church at least once a month, have high academic expectations, and watch little television are the most likely to have positive moral attitudes toward other people's property.

Regarding environmental issues, at least half of the pupils express positive moral attitudes with regard to all 6 items. This table has the highest scores of all, ranging from 64% to 79% of the pupils expressing positive moral attitudes. Of the school approaches, the only approach that is likely to encourage positive attitudes toward environmental issues is that of teaching the religions separately rather than thematically. Other approaches make no significant difference. Regarding the other factors likely to influence pupils' moral attitudes toward environmental issues, teenage girls who attend church at least once a month, have high academic expectations, and watch 3 to 4 hours of television a day are the most likely to have positive moral attitudes toward environmental issues. This is the only instance where more than one hour of television a day is likely to have a positive influence.

Drawing these findings together, the majority of the pupils have negative attitudes toward most aspects of religious education, secular spiritual experience, Christian spiritual experience, Christianity in general, Christian belief, personal moral choices, and sex-related issues. Pupils' responses in relation to using potentially harmful drugs are evenly balanced, most pupils considering it acceptable to use the less dangerous drugs, wrong to use the more dangerous ones. Most pupils have positive attitudes toward respecting other people's property, and a very large majority of pupils have positive attitudes toward care for the environment, which includes respect for animals.

Implications for religious education

If viewed from the perspective of the different school approaches, provision for religious education, whether adequate or otherwise, makes no significant difference to pupils' moral attitudes, and a minimalist approach is more likely to encourage positive attitudes toward spiritual experience and acceptance of Christian beliefs. The present

research therefore suggests that pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes are influenced by other factors.

In the religious education that is provided, in most cases there is no significant difference in pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes whether Christianity is taught 'in the main', or whether there is a 'world religions' approach. However, a 'mainly Christianity' approach is more likely than a 'world religions' approach to encourage positive attitudes toward self, and toward other people's property. Since the government of the mid-1990s listed self-respect as an aspect of spiritual development (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 3) and respect for others' property as an aspect of moral development (National Curriculum Council 1993a: 4), schools that teach Christianity 'in the main' are contributing to these particular aspects of pupils' spiritual and moral development.

In most cases there is no significant difference in pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes whether religions are taught thematically or separately. It seems that pupils are likely to be influenced by other factors. Fears that a thematic approach would cause confusion, or intolerance, for example, thus detracting from pupils' spiritual and moral development, appear to have been unfounded. The research findings suggest that teachers may use with confidence whichever approach they prefer or consider appropriate.

The pattern of no significant difference in most cases changes when comparisons are made between a phenomenological approach and an experiential approach. A phenomenological approach is more likely than an experiential approach to encourage positive attitudes toward most aspects of spirituality and morality. It appears that older pupils benefit from a detached, evaluative approach to studying religions, and do not wish to have their own experiences placed in a religious context. Teachers might therefore focus on increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions, encouraging discussion and debate, and developing their evaluative skills.

With respect to influences external to school, the research data have suggested that teenage girls are more likely than teenage boys to have positive attitudes toward most of the measures of spiritual and moral development. Additionally, those who are the

most academically able are the most likely to have positive attitudes toward religious education, self, drugs, property and environmental issues. Frequent church attendance is likely to result in positive attitudes toward most items measuring spiritual and moral development, and pupils who watch little television are more likely than those who watch much to have positive attitudes in most respects.

These findings suggest that teachers need to find ways of engaging the interest of the less able pupils, particularly the teenage boys in their classes. Since frequent church attendance relates to positive attitudes toward most of the statements used to measure spiritual and moral development, teachers might invite members of faith communities to make regular contributions to religious education lessons. Although those who watch little television are the most likely to have positive attitudes in respect of spiritual and moral development, the data have suggested that the majority of pupils watch several hours of television on most days. Teachers might therefore use the medium of television or video-film as a major resource for religious education. Information provided by the teacher questionnaires shows that these resources are already in use in some schools, and this might be an area for further development.

Time has moved on since this survey took place. With the exception of the few cases identified above, it appears that on the whole, the religious education of the mid-1990s made little contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The aims of the government of the mid-1990s appear to have been largely unfulfilled. In more recent years it seems that government has located the teaching of values in 'Personal, Social and Health Education' (the word 'Moral' being replaced by 'Health'), and in citizenship courses. This leaves religious education free to focus more clearly on teaching religion. Religious education no longer needs to be used as a tool for promoting moral values, and indeed pupils appear to resist the teaching of moral values in the context of religious education. Religious education can now focus on enabling pupils to understand and engage with the spirituality of the religions, a spirituality which, in the context of Christianity, involves love for God and love for neighbour, a love which in itself is moral law.

Recommendations for further research.

The present research has provided a detailed profile of religious education in non-denominational state-maintained secondary schools in one county, in the mid-1990s, and the impact of that religious education on teenage pupils' spiritual and moral development. However, the present study has a limited application.

First, it has not fully exploited the data produced by the pupil survey. Other factors featured in the pupil survey may be significant predictors of pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes. Comparing the means of pupils' scores indicates possible correlations but it does not indicate causation. The use of more sophisticated statistical techniques, such as multiple regression, makes it possible to correlate more than two things together and identify which of a number of factors are the most likely to influence attitudes.

Secondly, the data provided by the teacher and pupil questionnaires present a picture that can be considered truly representative of the situation in one county, namely Cornwall, at a particular point in time. Yet the present results are limited in their application, since generalisations relevant to the rest of Britain cannot be made from the data from one area. Since Cornwall is unrepresentative of much of the rest of Britain, it would be of value to replicate the study in other areas.

Thirdly, the situation in Cornwall has changed since the mid-1990s. That period was for religious education a time of rapid change, and increasing government pressure. Some teachers expressed uncertainty about their role in teaching religion in county schools. The situation now is somewhat different. There is now a different agreed syllabus for religious education, fewer religions are taught at each key stage, and in-service training for teachers of religious education has improved in quantity and quality since the time of the survey. A replication study might reveal new teaching approaches, and whether the initiatives of recent years have enabled religious education to make a better contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Appendix 1

Teacher Questionnaire

Cornwall

Religious

Education

Survey

This survey is part of a research project designed to show the needs of teachers involved in religious education throughout Cornwall, and it is hoped that the results of the survey might be used to relieve some of the pressures to which RE teachers may be exposed.

Please be kind enough to fill in this questionnaire. In order to take as little of your time as possible, the first part of the questionnaire has been designed with pre-coded answers. The numbers in the boxes are there to assist computer analysis, and have no other significance.

Please express your views honestly. Your answers will be treated in strictest confidence. They will be programmed on a computer to produce tables, the results of which will be analysed by Professor Francis, in Carmarthen, and myself. Your actual replies will not be seen by anyone else. The number at the top of the page is there only so that we may know who has replied - it will be torn off the day it is received.

The results of the research will be made available to you as soon as possible. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your help.

Penny Jennings.

1   Number of pupils in year 10

2   Total number of teaching staff

3   Number of staff teaching RE

4   Number of RE staff with professional
     qualification in RE

5   How many hours of RE teaching
     do groups in year 7 receive in a year?
     (Please tick the appropriate box)

none	1	
less than 20	2	
20 - 29	3	
30 - 39	4	
40 - 49	5	
50 and over	6	

6   How many hours of RE teaching
     do groups in year 8 receive in a year?

none	1	
less than 20	2	
20 - 29	3	
30 - 39	4	
40 - 49	5	
50 and over	6	

7   How many hours of RE teaching
     do groups in year 9 receive in a year?

none	1	
less than 20	2	
20 - 29	3	
30 - 39	4	
40 - 49	5	
50 and over	6	

8   How many hours of RE teaching do non-exam groups in year 10 receive in a year?

none	1	
less than 20	2	
20 - 29	3	
30 - 39	4	
40 - 49	5	
50 and over	6	

9   How many hours of RE teaching do non-exam groups in year 11 receive in a year?

none	1	
less than 20	2	
20 - 29	3	
30 - 39	4	
40 - 49	5	
50 and over	6	

10   How many hours of RE teaching do exam groups in year 10 receive in a year?

none	1	
less than 20	2	
20 - 29	3	
30 - 39	4	
40 - 49	5	
50 and over	6	

11   How many hours of RE teaching do exam groups in year 11 receive in a year?

none	1	
less than 20	2	
20 - 29	3	
30 - 39	4	
40 - 49	5	
50 and over	6	

12	How is RE teaching organised for the non-exam pupils in years 10 and 11?	as a separate subject	1	
		as part of a humanities course	2	
		as part of a PSE course	3	
		modular	4	
		any other arrangement (please specify)	5	

| 13 | Do all pupils study Christianity at Key Stage 3? | yes | 2 | |
| | | no | 1 | |

| 14 | Do all pupils study Christianity at Key Stage 4? | yes | 2 | |
| | | no | 1 | |

| 15 | Do all pupils study at least one religion other than Christianity at Key Stage 3? | yes | 2 | |
| | | no | 1 | |

| 16 | Do all pupils study at least one religion other than Christianity at Key Stage 4? | yes | 2 | |
| | | no | 1 | |

| 17 | How do pupils study religions? | thematically | 1 | |
| | | separately | 2 | |

18	Which of the following would you say *best* describes your approach to teaching RE?	phenomenological	1	
		confessional	2	
		experiential	3	

19 How many year 10 pupils are following a GCSE course in Religious Studies?

20 Are pupils following a GCSE course in:-

(please tick as many boxes as appropriate)

a gospel text	
any other biblical text	
Christianity as a world religion	
Buddhism	
Hinduism	
Islam	
Judaism	
Sikhism	
moral issues	
any other course	

21 Are the majority of RE lessons taught in a specialist RE room?

yes	2	
no	1	

22 How often are departmental meetings held?

weekly	6	
fortnightly	5	
monthly	4	
half-termly	3	
termly	2	
never	1	

23 How closely do you follow the county agreed syllabus or appropriate denominational syllabus for religious education?

very closely	4	
fairly closely	3	
occasionally	2	
not at all	1	

24   In RE lessons at Key Stage 3, how often do pupils

	often	occas-ionally	seldom	never
use copies of the Bible				
visit Christian churches				
visit non-Christian places of worship				
see slides or film strips				
watch films or videos				
watch television				
hear radio broadcasts				
hear tapes or cassettes				
use text books				
use reference books				
use work-sheets prepared by an RE teacher				
use computer programmes/CD Roms				

25   In RE lessons at Key Stage 4, how often do pupils

	often	occas-ionally	seldom	never
use copies of the Bible				
visit Christian churches				
visit non-Christian places of worship				
see slides or film strips				
watch films or videos				
watch television				
hear radio broadcasts				
hear tapes or cassettes				
use text books				
use reference books				
use work-sheets prepared by an RE teacher				
use computer programmes/CD Roms				

26 Which versions of the Bible
are available in class sets?
(Please tick as many boxes
as appropriate)

Authorised Version	
Revised Standard Version	
New English Bible	
Jerusalem Bible	
Good News Bible	
New International Version	
Revised English Bible	
other (please specify)	

27 Which text books are used in years 7-11? (Please give titles and authors).

Year 7 ....

....

....

Year 8 ....

....

....

Year 9 ....

....

....

Year 10 ....

....

....

Year 11 ....

....

....

28   How frequently do the following people contribute to RE lessons?

	once a week	once a month	once a term	rarely	never
leaders of Christian churches					
leaders of other faiths					
secular visitors					

29   Do you belong to a church or other religious group? (Please tick)

no	1	
Baptist	2	
Community Church/House Church	3	
Church of England/Anglican	4	
Jehovah's Witness	5	
Methodist	6	
Roman Catholic	7	
URC/Presbyterian	8	
Buddhist	9	
Hindu	10	
Jewish	11	
Muslim	12	
Sikh	13	
other (please specify)	14	

30   Do you attend church or other place of worship

most weeks	5	
at least once a month	4	
major festivals	3	
at least once a year	2	
never	1	

Please answer the next set of questions in the following way:- Read each sentence carefully and think, "Do I agree with it?"

If you *Agree Strongly*, put a ring round	AS	A	NC	D	DS
If you *Agree*, put a ring round..........	AS	A	NC	D	DS
If you are *Not Certain*, put a ring round......	AS	A	NC	D	DS
If you *Disagree*, put a ring round	AS	A	NC	D	DS
If you *Disagree Strongly*, put a ring round ..	AS	A	NC	D	DS

How much do you agree that RE should help pupils to:-

1	understand what Buddhism is	AS	A	NC	D	DS
2	understand what it would mean to take Buddhism seriously	AS	A	NC	D	DS
3	understand what Christianity is	AS	A	NC	D	DS
4	understand what it would mean to take Christianity seriously	AS	A	NC	D	DS
5	understand what Hinduism is	AS	A	NC	D	DS
6	understand what it would mean to take Hinduism seriously	AS	A	NC	D	DS
7	understand what Islam is	AS	A	NC	D	DS
8	understand what it would mean to take Islam seriously	AS	A	NC	D	DS
9	understand what Judaism is	AS	A	NC	D	DS
10	understand what it would mean to take Judaism seriously	AS	A	NC	D	DS
11	understand what Sikhism is	AS	A	NC	D	DS
12	understand what it would mean to take Sikhism seriously	AS	A	NC	D	DS
13	understand the Tripitaka	AS	A	NC	D	DS
14	apply the teaching of the Tripitaka to their own lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS
15	understand the Bible	AS	A	NC	D	DS
16	apply the teaching of the Bible to their own lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS
17	understand the Vedas	AS	A	NC	D	DS
18	apply the teaching of the Vedas to their own lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS

19	understand the Koran	AS	A	NC	D	DS
20	apply the teaching of the Koran to their own lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS
21	understand the Old Testament	AS	A	NC	D	DS
22	apply the teaching of the Old Testament to their own lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS
23	understand the Adi Granth...............................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
24	apply the teaching of the Adi Granth to their own lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS
25	understand the central beliefs of Christianity	AS	A	NC	D	DS
26	understand the central beliefs of other major world religions	AS	A	NC	D	DS
27	understand the central practices of Christianity	AS	A	NC	D	DS
28	understand the central practices of other major world religions	AS	A	NC	D	DS
29	experience feelings of awe	AS	A	NC	D	DS
30	develop an awareness of self	AS	A	NC	D	DS
31	trust in their own inner resources to overcome problems	AS	A	NC	D	DS
32	appreciate human achievement	AS	A	NC	D	DS
33	recognise their own limitations	AS	A	NC	D	DS
34	be aware of their feelings and emotions	AS	A	NC	D	DS
35	relate to their environment	AS	A	NC	D	DS
36	recognise that no-one is perfect	AS	A	NC	D	DS
37	be creative	AS	A	NC	D	DS
38	experience feelings of transcendence	AS	A	NC	D	DS

How much do you agree with the following statements?

39	Christianity should be given more than 50% of the time allotted to teaching RE throughout the school	AS	A	NC	D	DS
40	Christianity should be allotted the same amount of time as other world religions	AS	A	NC	D	DS
41	Christianity should be allotted 75% or more of the time allotted to teaching RE	AS	A	NC	D	DS

42	Christianity should not be taught in school	AS	A	NC	D	DS
43	Religion should not be taught in school	AS	A	NC	D	DS
44	Only RE lessons should be responsible for promoting the spiritual development of pupils	AS	A	NC	D	DS
45	All subjects of the curriculum should promote the spiritual development of pupils	AS	A	NC	D	DS
46	RE should not be taught by an agnostic	AS	A	NC	D	DS
47	RE should not be taught by an atheist	AS	A	NC	D	DS
48	RE should not be taught by a practising Buddhist....	AS	A	NC	D	DS
49	RE should not be taught by a practising Christian...	AS	A	NC	D	DS
50	RE should not be taught by a humanist	AS	A	NC	D	DS
51	RE should not be taught by a practising Hindu	AS	A	NC	D	DS
52	RE should not be taught by a practising Jew.....	AS	A	NC	D	DS
53	RE should not be taught by a practising Muslim ...	AS	A	NC	D	DS
54	RE should not be taught by a practising Sikh	AS	A	NC	D	DS

To what extent would you agree with the following reasons why RE is a difficult subject to teach?

55	Lack of specialist RE staff	AS	A	NC	D	DS
56	Lack of in-service training	AS	A	NC	D	DS
57	Insufficient time allowed for RE in the curriculum	AS	A	NC	D	DS
58	Lack of resources	AS	A	NC	D	DS
59	Insufficient knowledge of Christianity	AS	A	NC	D	DS
60	Insufficient knowledge of other world religions	AS	A	NC	D	DS
61	Insufficient understanding of the Bible	AS	A	NC	D	DS
62	Insufficient understanding of the sacred writings of other major world religions	AS	A	NC	D	DS

How much do you agree that RE should encourage pupils to:-

63	help others, particularly those less fortunate than themselves	AS	A	NC	D	DS
64	Tell the truth	AS	A	NC	D	DS
65	find a basis for moral behaviour	AS	A	NC	D	DS
66	respect the rights and property of others	AS	A	NC	D	DS
67	distinguish between right and wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
68	keep promises	AS	A	NC	D	DS
69	reject bullying	AS	A	NC	D	DS
70	find their own answers to current ethical problems	AS	A	NC	D	DS
71	Obey the law	AS	A	NC	D	DS
72	show tolerance towards those with different views from their own	AS	A	NC	D	DS
73	respect those in authority	AS	A	NC	D	DS
74	develop good relationships with other people	AS	A	NC	D	DS

How much do you agree that RE should help pupils to find comfort in:-

75	seeing God as their heavenly Father	AS	A	NC	D	DS
76	acknowledging Jesus as their Lord and Saviour	AS	A	NC	D	DS
77	finding forgiveness for sin through Jesus' sacrifice	AS	A	NC	D	DS
78	expecting answers to prayer	AS	A	NC	D	DS
79	believing that God loves them	AS	A	NC	D	DS
80	experiencing the love, joy and peace of the Holy Spirit	AS	A	NC	D	DS
81	being aware that God has a plan for their lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS
82	knowing that Jesus will always be with them	AS	A	NC	D	DS
83	believing that they will see loved ones again in heaven	AS	A	NC	D	DS
84	finding fulfilment in serving God	AS	A	NC	D	DS

85	knowing that God keeps his promises	AS	A	NC	D	DS
86	believing that God heals people today	AS	A	NC	D	DS

How much do you agree that RE should help pupils to believe that:-

87	God created the world	AS	A	NC	D	DS
88	God created the world in six days	AS	A	NC	D	DS
89	the human race has descended from Adam and Eve	AS	A	NC	D	DS
90	human nature is inherently sinful	AS	A	NC	D	DS
91	Jesus is the Son of God	AS	A	NC	D	DS
92	Jesus was born of a virgin	AS	A	NC	D	DS
93	Jesus died to save people from their sins	AS	A	NC	D	DS
94	Jesus rose from the dead	AS	A	NC	D	DS
95	Jesus will return in glory one day	AS	A	NC	D	DS
96	Satan tempts people to do wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
97	God will ultimately judge people's lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS
98	Christians go to heaven when they die	AS	A	NC	D	DS
99	the Holy Spirit is given to every believer	AS	A	NC	D	DS
100	the Bible is the inspired word of God	AS	A	NC	D	DS

If you are unhappy about any aspect of the way in which you are required to teach religious education in your school, would you please comment?

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your help is very much appreciated.

Appendix 2

Pupil Questionnaire

Cornwall

Religious

Education

Survey

This survey looks at what year nine and year ten pupils think about life in general, and about religion. The survey has been designed to let the voice of young people be clearly heard. Please help us by answering the questions.

Please say what you really think and try to be as honest as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not discuss your answers with anybody else, and do not pause for too long over any one question. Try to answer every question. We are very interested in your views.

Everything you answer is completely PRIVATE and CONFIDENTIAL. You do not have to write your name on this booklet. No one in school will read your answers.

We hope you will find the questionnaire interesting and enjoyable to do.

Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

Penny Jennings

1   Which sex are you?

male	1	
female	2	

2   What academic qualifications do you expect to have when you leave school?

none	1	
1 - 4 GCSE grades D to G	2	
5 or more GCSE grades D to G	3	
1 - 4 GCSE grades A to C	4	
5 or more GCSE grades A to C	5	
1 - 2 A/AS Levels	6	
3 or more A/AS Levels	7	

3   Last Wednesday, how much television did you watch?

none	1	
less than 1 hour	2	
1 - 2 hours	3	
2 - 3 hours	4	
3 - 4 hours	5	
over 4 hours	6	

4   Last week, how much television did you watch?

none	1	
on 1 or 2 days	2	
on 3 or 4 days	3	
on 5 or 6 days	4	
every day	5	

5 Do you watch television soaps,

e.g., EastEnders, Neighbours, etc.?

at least once a week	4	
at least once a month	3	
occasionally	2	
never	1	

6 Do you watch sport on television?

at least once a week	4	
at least once a month	3	
occasionally	2	
never	1	

7 Do you watch light entertainment,

e.g. Noel's House Party, Barrymore, etc.?

at least once a week	4	
at least once a month	3	
occasionally	2	
never	1	

8 Do you watch current affairs,

e.g. News, Panorama, etc.?

at least once a week	4	
at least once a month	3	
occasionally	2	
never	1	

9 Do you watch films or videos

about the occult,

e.g. The Exorcist, Poltergeist, etc.?

at least once a week	4	
at least once a month	3	
occasionally	2	
never	1	

10 Do you watch violent/horror films or videos,

e.g. Puppet Master, Dracula, etc.?

at least once a week	4	
at least once a month	3	
occasionally	2	
never	1	

11 Have you been to a Christian church within the last year for any of these services? (Please tick "yes" or "no" against each service)

	yes	no
wedding		
christening/baptism		
funeral		
school carols		
Christmas day/midnight		
Easter day/eve		
harvest festival		
Mothering Sunday		

12 Do you belong to a church or other religious group?

no	1	
Baptist	2	
Community Church/House Church	3	
Church of England/Anglican	4	
Jehovah's Witness	5	
Methodist	6	
Roman Catholic	7	
URC/Presbyterian	8	
Buddhist	9	
Hindu	10	
Jewish	11	
Muslim	12	
Sikh	13	
other (please specify)	14	

13 Do you go to church or other place of worship?

nearly every week	5	
at least once a month	4	
sometimes	3	
once or twice a year	2	
never		

14   Do you attend any of the following church activities?

(Please tick "yes" or "no" against each activity)

	yes	no
Bible Study Group		
Prayer Group		
Church Youth Group		
Music Group		
Choir		

15   Do you read the Bible by yourself?

nearly every day	5	
at least once a week	4	
at least once a month	3	
occasionally	2	
never	1	

16   Do you pray by yourself?

nearly every day	5	
at least once a week	4	
at least once a month	3	
occasionally	2	
never	1	

17   Do you pray in times of special need?

yes	2	
no	1	

18   Have you been baptised as a child/ christened?

yes	2	
no	1	
don't know	9	

19   Have you been confirmed or admitted to adult membership of a church?

yes	2	
no	1	
don't know	9	

20 Does your mother go to church or other place of worship?

nearly every week	5	
at least once a month	4	
sometimes	3	
once or twice a year	2	
never	1	
don't know	9	

21 Does your father go to church or other place of worship?

nearly every week	5	
at least once a month	4	
sometimes	3	
once or twice a year	2	
never	1	
don't know	9	

22 Does your father have a job?

yes, full-time	3	
yes, part-time	2	
no	1	
retired	5	
don't know	9	

23 If yes, what does he do? ....
(Please be precise) ....

24 Does your mother have a job?

yes, full-time	3	
yes, part-time	2	
no	1	
retired	5	
don't know	9	

25 If "yes" what does she do? ....
(Please be precise) ....

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Part Two Please answer these questions by putting a circle around 'YES' or 'NO'

1   Does your mood often go up and down? ....YES   NO

2   Are you a talkative person? ....YES   NO

3   Would being in debt worry you? ....YES   NO

4   Are you rather lively? ....YES   NO

5   Were you ever greedy by helping yourself to more than your share
of anything? ....YES   NO

6   Would you take drugs which may have strange or dangerous
effects? ....YES   NO

7   Have you ever blamed someone for doing something you knew was
really your fault? ....YES   NO

8   Do you prefer to go your own way rather than act by the rules? ......YES   NO

9   Do you often feel "fed up"? ....YES   NO

10   Have you ever taken anything (even a pin or button) that belonged
to someone else? ....YES   NO

11   Would you call yourself a nervous person? ....YES   NO

12   Do you think marriage is old-fashioned and should be
done away with? ....YES   NO

13   Can you easily get some life into a rather dull party? ....YES   NO

14   Are you a worrier? ....YES   NO

15   Do you tend to keep in the background on social occasions? ....YES   NO

16   Does it worry you if you know there are mistakes in your work? .... YES   NO

17   Have you ever cheated at a game? ....YES   NO

18   Do you suffer from "nerves"? ....YES   NO

19   Have you ever taken advantage of someone? ....YES   NO

20   Are you mostly quiet when you are with other people? ....YES   NO

21   Do you often feel lonely? ....YES   NO

22   Is it better to follow society's rules than go your own way? .... YES   NO

23	Do other people think of you as being very lively?	YES	NO
24	Do you always practice what you preach?	YES	NO
25	I often wish I were someone else	YES	NO
26	I find it very hard to talk in front of the class	YES	NO
27	There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could	YES	NO
28	I can make up my mind without too much trouble	YES	NO
29	I get easily upset at home	YES	NO
30	I'm a lot of fun to be with	YES	NO
31	It takes me a long time to get used to anything new	YES	NO
32	I'm popular with kids my own age	YES	NO
33	My parents usually consider my feelings	YES	NO
34	I give in very easily	YES	NO
35	My parents expect too much of me	YES	NO
36	It's pretty tough to be me	YES	NO
37	Things are all mixed up in my life	YES	NO
38	Kids usually follow my ideas	YES	NO
39	I have a low opinion of myself	YES	NO
40	There are many times when I'd like to leave home	YES	NO
41	I often feel upset in school	YES	NO
42	I'm not as nice looking as most people	YES	NO
43	If I have something to say, I usually say it	YES	NO
44	My parents understand me	YES	NO
45	Most people are better liked than I am	YES	NO
46	I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me	YES	NO
47	I often get discouraged in school	YES	NO
48	Things usually don't bother me	YES	NO
49	I can't be depended on	YES	NO

IN YOUR RE LESSONS HAVE YOU:	often	occas- ionally	seldom	never
used copies of the Bible				
visited Christian churches				
visited non-Christian places of worship				
seen slides or film strips				
watched films or videos				
watched television				
heard radio broadcasts				
heard tapes or cassettes				
used text books				
used reference books				
used worksheets prepared by an RE teacher				
used computer programmes/CD ROMs				
had discussions or debates				
copied notes from the blackboard				
taken down notes dictated by a teacher				
practised meditation				
explored your feelings about God in art-work				
listened to a speaker from a Christian church				
listened to a speaker from a non-Christian religion				
listened to a speaker from a non-religious group, e.g. a charity				
acted out a religious ceremony or festival, e.g. Passover, wedding				
explored the development of psychic powers, e.g. levitation, spoon-bending				
used your imagination, e.g. to enter into others' feelings, or to feel close to God				

> Please answer these questions by putting a circle around 'YES' or 'NO'. The questions refer to everything studied in RE lessons since entering secondary school.

Have you studied these topics from the bible?

1	the creation of the world..	YES	NO
2	the ten commandments..	YES	NO
3	patriarchs of the Old Testament, e.g. Abraham..............	YES	NO
4	kings of the Old Testament, e.g. David......................	YES	NO
5	the 23rd psalm ("The Lord is my Shepherd")................	YES	NO
6	Jesus' birth...	YES	NO
7	Jesus' baptism..	YES	NO
8	Jesus' temptations..	YES	NO
9	Jesus' crucifixion..	YES	NO
10	Jesus' resurrection...	YES	NO
11	the Sermon on the Mount..	YES	NO
12	parables, e.g., the good Samaritan............................	YES	NO
13	healing miracles, e.g., Jesus healing a blind man............	YES	NO
14	nature miracles, e.g., Jesus stilling the storm.................	YES	NO
15	life after death..	YES	NO
16	St Paul's teaching on love..	YES	NO

Have you studied these topics in Christianity?

17	Advent...	YES	NO
18	Christmas..	YES	NO
19	Lent..	YES	NO
20	Easter..	YES	NO
21	Pentecost/Whitsun..	YES	NO
22	Christening/Baptism...	YES	NO
23	Eucharist/Holy Communion......................................	YES	NO
24	Church/Chapel...	YES	NO

Have you studied these topics in Buddhism?

25	Wesak/Vesak/Buddha Day	YES	NO
26	Five Moral Precepts	YES	NO
27	Four Noble Truths	YES	NO
28	Noble Eightfold Path	YES	NO
29	Meditation	YES	NO
30	Sangha/Monastic Community	YES	NO
31	Pagoda/Temple	YES	NO

Have you studied these topics in Hinduism?

32	Holi/Spring Festival	YES	NO
33	Navaratri/Nine Nights	YES	NO
34	Divali/Diwali/Festival of Lights	YES	NO
35	Shivaratri/Shiva Festival	YES	NO
36	Upanayam/Sacred Thread Ceremony	YES	NO
37	Arti Ceremony/Worship of Light	YES	NO
38	Mandir/Temple	YES	NO

Have you studied these topics in Islam?

39	Ramadan/Season of Fasting	YES	NO
40	Id ul-Fitr/Breaking of the Fast	YES	NO
41	Id ul-Adha/Feast of Sacrifice	YES	NO
42	Adhan/Call to Prayer	YES	NO
43	Hajj/Pilgrimage to Mecca	YES	NO
44	Mosque	YES	NO

Have you studied these topics in Judaism?

45	Pesach/Passover	YES	NO
46	Yom Kippur/Atonement Day	YES	NO
47	Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles	YES	NO

48	Hanukah/Feast of Lights	YES	NO
49	Bar/Bat Mitzvah/Coming of Age Ceremony	YES	NO
50	Shabbat/Sabbath	YES	NO
51	Synagogue	YES	NO

Have you studied these topics in Sikhism?

52	Hola Mohalla/Spring Festival	YES	NO
53	Diwali/Festival of Freedom	YES	NO
54	Gurpurb/Anniversary of a Guru	YES	NO
55	Amrit Ceremony/Initiation	YES	NO
56	Amand karaj/Wedding Ceremony	YES	NO
57	Five Ks	YES	NO
58	Gurdwara	YES	NO

Have you studied the following moral/ethical topics?

59	love, sex and marriage	YES	NO
60	divorce	YES	NO
61	contraception	YES	NO
62	homosexuality	YES	NO
63	drug abuse	YES	NO
64	suicide	YES	NO
65	racism	YES	NO
66	abortion	YES	NO
67	'mercy killing'	YES	NO
68	gambling	YES	NO
69	human rights	YES	NO
70	animal rights	YES	NO
71	'green issues'	YES	NO
72	world hunger	YES	NO

Part Four Please answer the next set of questions in the following way. Read each sentence carefully and think, "Do I agree with it?"

If you *Agree Strongly*, put a ring around...............	AS	A	NC	D	DS
If you *Agree*, put a ring around.........................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
If you are *Not Certain*, put a ring around.............	AS	A	NC	D	DS
If you *Disagree*, put a ring around.....................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
If you *Disagree Strongly*, put a ring around..........	AS	A	NC	D	DS

About religious education

1	RE is usually interesting...............................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
2	RE is a waste of time..................................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
3	RE helps me to understand what God is like..........	AS	A	NC	D	DS
4	I enjoy learning about different religions..............	AS	A	NC	D	DS
5	RE helps me to make sense of my life.................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
6	RE is enjoyable when it is a not a GCSE subject....	AS	A	NC	D	DS
7	RE is boring...	AS	A	NC	D	DS
8	RE wastes time I could spend on exam subjects......	AS	A	NC	D	DS
9	RE helps me to find rules to live by...................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
10	It is interesting to learn about life after death.........	AS	A	NC	D	DS
11	RE helps me to choose a faith to live by...............	AS	A	NC	D	DS
12	RE helps me to sort out my problems..................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
13	RE provides relaxation in a busy timetable...........	AS	A	NC	D	DS
14	I enjoy discussing moral problems in RE.............	AS	A	NC	D	DS
15	RE helps me to think about who I really am..........	AS	A	NC	D	DS
16	RE is fun..	AS	A	NC	D	DS
17	RE helps me to lead a better life.......................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
18	It is important to know what people of other faiths believe..	AS	A	NC	D	DS
19	I enjoy debates in RE...................................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
20	Studying the bible in RE is boring.....................	AS	A	NC	D	DS

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22	RE helps me to think about why I am here	AS	A	NC	D	DS
23	RE helps me to believe in God	AS	A	NC	D	DS

What do you believe?

1	I believe in God	AS	A	NC	D	DS
2	I have a religious faith	AS	A	NC	D	DS
3	I regard myself as a Christian	AS	A	NC	D	DS
4	I believe in heaven	AS	A	NC	D	DS
5	I believe in hell	AS	A	NC	D	DS
6	I should obey the ten commandments	AS	A	NC	D	DS
7	I should try to follow Jesus' teaching	AS	A	NC	D	DS
8	God is my heavenly Father.........................	AS	A	NC	D	DS
9	Jesus was a real person	AS	A	NC	D	DS
10	The Holy Spirit gives me love, joy and peace in my life	AS	A	NC	D	DS
11	God has a plan for my life	AS	A	NC	D	DS
12	God created the world	AS	A	NC	D	DS
13	God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh	AS	A	NC	D	DS
14	The bible is the word of God	AS	A	NC	D	DS
15	Jesus was born of a virgin	AS	A	NC	D	DS
16	Jesus will return to earth some day	AS	A	NC	D	DS
17	God judges what I do and say	AS	A	NC	D	DS
18	Jesus died to save me	AS	A	NC	D	DS
19	Jesus changed real water into real wine	AS	A	NC	D	DS
20	Jesus walked on water	AS	A	NC	D	DS
21	Jesus Christ is the Son of God	AS	A	NC	D	DS
22	God is controlling every bit of our lives	AS	A	NC	D	DS
23	Jesus really rose from the dead	AS	A	NC	D	DS

24	The Devil tempts people to do wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
25	Jesus still heals people	AS	A	NC	D	DS
26	I believe in life after death	AS	A	NC	D	DS
27	When we die, we go to heaven	AS	A	NC	D	DS
28	I find it boring to listen to the Bible	AS	A	NC	D	DS
29	I know that Jesus helps me	AS	A	NC	D	DS
30	Saying my prayers helps me a lot	AS	A	NC	D	DS
31	The Church is very important to me	AS	A	NC	D	DS
32	I think going to Church is a waste of my time	AS	A	NC	D	DS
33	I want to love Jesus	AS	A	NC	D	DS
34	I think Church services are boring	AS	A	NC	D	DS
35	I think people who pray are stupid	AS	A	NC	D	DS
36	God helps me to lead a better life	AS	A	NC	D	DS
37	I like to learn about God very much	AS	A	NC	D	DS
38	God means a lot to me	AS	A	NC	D	DS
39	I believe that God helps people	AS	A	NC	D	DS
40	Prayer helps me a lot	AS	A	NC	D	DS
41	I know that Jesus is very close to me	AS	A	NC	D	DS
42	I think praying is a good thing	AS	A	NC	D	D
43	I think the Bible is out of date	AS	A	NC	D	DS
44	I believe that God listens to prayers	AS	A	NC	D	DS
45	Jesus doesn't mean anything to me	AS	A	NC	D	DS
46	God is very real to me	AS	A	NC	D	DS
47	I think saying prayers does no good	AS	A	NC	D	DS
48	The idea of God means much to me	AS	A	NC	D	DS
49	I believe that Jesus still helps people	AS	A	NC	D	DS
50	I know that God helps me	AS	A	NC	D	DS

51   I find it hard to believe in God .... AS A NC D DS

I have felt close to God/some power beyond myself when I have

1	been out walking alone	AS	A	NC	D	DS
2	watched a beautiful sunset	AS	A	NC	D	DS
3	looked up at the stars on a clear night	AS	A	NC	D	DS
4	sat on a moonlit beach	AS	A	NC	D	DS
5	listened to my favourite piece of music	AS	A	NC	D	DS
6	produced a good painting/sculpture/tapestry, etc	AS	A	NC	D	DS
7	enjoyed my favourite hobby	AS	A	NC	D	DS
8	done well at my favourite sport	AS	A	NC	D	DS
9	looked at a tiny baby	AS	A	NC	D	DS
10	helped someone in need	AS	A	NC	D	DS
11	visited a beautiful church or cathedral	AS	A	NC	D	DS
12	listened to church music	AS	A	NC	D	DS
13	sung a favourite hymn or chorus in church	AS	A	NC	D	DS
14	received communion	AS	A	NC	D	DS
15	been to a wedding	AS	A	NC	D	DS
16	been to a funeral	AS	A	NC	D	DS
17	cried to God to help me in times of trouble	AS	A	NC	D	DS
18	prayed with a friend about a problem	AS	A	NC	D	DS

How do you feel about 'right' and 'wrong'?

1	It is wrong to steal	AS	A	NC	D	DS
2	It is wrong to keep money or things you find	AS	A	NC	D	DS
3	It is wrong to tell lies	AS	A	NC	D	DS
4	It is wrong to borrow money you can't pay back	AS	A	NC	D	DS
5	It is wrong to buy stolen goods	AS	A	NC	D	DS

6	It is wrong to buy cigarettes under the legal age (16 years)	AS	A	NC	D	DS
7	It is wrong to travel without a ticket	AS	A	NC	D	DS
8	It is wrong to buy alcoholic drinks under the legal age (18 years)	AS	A	NC	D	DS
9	It is wrong to have sex under the legal age (16 years)	AS	A	NC	D	DS
10	It is wrong to write graffiti wherever you like	AS	A	NC	D	DS
11	It is wrong to disobey your parents	AS	A	NC	D	DS
12	It is wrong to play truant from school	AS	A	NC	D	DS
13	It is wrong to swear	AS	A	NC	D	DS
14	It is wrong to use Christ's name as a swear word	AS	A	NC	D	DS
15	It is wrong to drive without a licence	AS	A	NC	D	DS
16	It is wrong to drink and drive	AS	A	NC	D	DS
17	It is wrong for drivers to break the speed limits	AS	A	NC	D	DS
18	It is wrong to work on a Sunday	AS	A	NC	D	DS
19	It is wrong to put money on horses	AS	A	NC	D	DS
20	It is wrong to buy lottery tickets	AS	A	NC	D	DS
21	It is wrong to take a bribe	AS	A	NC	D	DS
22	It is wrong to have an abortion	AS	A	NC	D	DS
23	It is wrong to commit suicide	AS	A	NC	D	DS
24	It is wrong to have sex with a casual acquaintance	AS	A	NC	D	DS
25	It is wrong to have sex with lots of partners	AS	A	NC	D	DS
26	It is wrong for a married woman to have sex with another man	AS	A	NC	D	DS
27	It is wrong for a married man to have sex with another woman	AS	A	NC	D	DS
28	It is wrong to have sex before marriage	AS	A	NC	D	DS
29	It is wrong to have sex with a member of the same sex	AS	A	NC	D	DS
30	It is wrong to drink alcohol	AS	A	NC	D	DS

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31	It is wrong to sniff glue	AS	A	NC	D	DS
32	It is wrong to smoke marijuana (hash or pot)	AS	A	NC	D	DS
33	It is wrong to become drunk	AS	A	NC	D	DS
34	It is wrong to sniff butane gas	AS	A	NC	D	DS
35	It is wrong to smoke cigarettes	AS	A	NC	D	DS
36	It is wrong to use heroin	AS	A	NC	D	DS
37	It is wrong to help a very sick person to die	AS	A	NC	D	DS
38	It is wrong to use animals for experiments	AS	A	NC	D	DS
39	It is wrong to hunt animals for sport	AS	A	NC	D	DS
40	It is wrong to kill animals for food	AS	A	NC	D	DS
41	It is wrong to let the poor countries starve	AS	A	NC	D	DS
42	It is wrong to destroy the rain forests	AS	A	NC	D	DS
43	It is wrong to pollute the atmosphere	AS	A	NC	D	DS
44	It is wrong to waste the earth's resources	AS	A	NC	D	DS
45	Prostitution is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
46	Mugging is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
47	Bullying is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
48	Divorce is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
49	Contraception is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
50	Pornography is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
51	Gambling is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
52	Shop lifting is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
53	Joy riding is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
54	Child abuse is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
55	Vandalism is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS
56	Racism is wrong	AS	A	NC	D	DS

PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL THE QUESTIONS

Have you any helpful comments you would like to make about this survey?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

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