

Primary subject information: Religious Education 2022/2023

Religious Education

Introduction

This document has been written to support Derbyshire link advisers to carry out a curriculum review of religious education and provide some background information where the link adviser is not a subject specialist.

Headteachers may also find it helpful to share this information with their subject leaders.

All maintained schools without a religious character are legally required to follow the locally agreed syllabus, which can be found on the Derbyshire Schoolsnet site:

[Derbyshire and Derby City Agreed Syllabus for RE](#)

The Derbyshire and Derby City Agreed Syllabus 2020-2025 was devised in partnership with RE Today Services.

Statutory basis of the Agreed Syllabus

The National Curriculum states that every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society and which prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. All state schools must teach RE to pupils at every key stage.

Principal aim

The principal aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

Legal requirements: What does the legislation in England say?

RE is for all pupils:

- RE must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over). It is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.
- This requirement does not apply for children below compulsory school age (although there are many examples of good practice of RE in nursery classes).
- Special schools should ensure that every pupil receives RE 'as far as is practicable'.

RE is determined locally, not nationally:

- A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE recommended by an Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by a local authority.
- Local authority maintained schools without a religious character must follow the locally agreed syllabus.
- Voluntary aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school, unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus.

- Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character should follow the locally agreed syllabus, unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school.
- Religious Education is also compulsory in faith and non-faith academies and free schools, as set out in their funding agreements. Academies may use their locally agreed syllabus, or a different locally agreed syllabus (with permission of the SACRE concerned) or devise their own curriculum.

RE is plural:

- The RE curriculum drawn up by a SACRE, or by an academy or free school, 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.
- The agreed syllabus has a duty 'to take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in a pluralistic manner' and 'must accord equal respect to different religious convictions, and to non-religious belief'. Note that the term 'religion' encompasses both religious and non-religious beliefs.

RE, academies and free schools:

- Free schools are academies in law and have the same requirement to provide RE and collective worship. In this document, any reference to academies includes free schools.
- As set out in their funding agreements, all academies are required to provide RE for all pupils, from Reception to Sixth Form, except those whose parents exercise their right to withdrawal.
- An academy must adopt a syllabus for RE. There is no requirement for an academy to adopt a locally agreed syllabus, as long as its own RE syllabus meets the requirements for a locally agreed syllabus, set out in section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The requirements are that a syllabus must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.
- RE is not subject to nationally prescribed purpose of study, aims, attainment targets, and assessment arrangements, but it is subject to inspection.

What religions are to be taught?

The agreed syllabus requires that all pupils learn from Christianity in each key stage. In addition, pupils will learn from the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example, Humanism, will also be the focus for study.

Religious traditions are to be studied in depth as follows:

Schools should consider the pupils they serve in deciding whether to go beyond the minimum entitlements to learning about religions, which are that pupils should learn from:

4–5s Reception	Children will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.
5–7s Key Stage 1	Christians and Muslims or Jewish people
7–11s Key Stage 2	Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people

This is the **minimum requirement**. Many schools may wish to go beyond the minimum.

Time for RE

Schools have a statutory responsibility to deliver RE to all pupils, except those withdrawn by parents.

Schools must ensure that sufficient time is given in order to enable pupils to meet the expectations set out in this agreed syllabus, ensuring that the curriculum is coherent and shows progression, particularly across transitions between key stages.

There is no single correct way of making appropriate provision for RE as long as the outcomes are met.

In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus effectively, the expectation is that there is a **minimum allocation of 5% of curriculum time for RE**. This is set out in the table below and based on the most recent national guidance.

4–5s	36 hours of RE (e.g. 50 minutes a week or some short sessions implemented through continuous provision)
5–7s:	36 hours of tuition per year (e.g. an hour a week, or less than an hour a week plus a series of RE days)
7–11s:	45 hours of tuition per year (e.g. an hour a week, or a series of RE days or weeks amounting to 45+ hours of RE)

Important notes:

- **RE is legally required for all pupils.** Plural RE that conveys and accords equal respect to different religions and non-religious worldviews (e.g. humanism) is a core subject and an entitlement for all pupils throughout their schooling.
- **RE is different from assembly.** Curriculum time for RE is distinct from the time spent on collective worship or school assembly, even though making links between the collective worship and the purposes and themes of RE would be good practice. The times given above are for RE.
- **Flexible delivery of RE is often good practice:** an RE themed day, or week of study can complement, but not usually replace, the regular programme of timetabled lessons.
- **RE should be taught in clearly identifiable time.** There is a common frontier between RE and such subjects as literacy, citizenship or personal, social and emotional (PSHE). However, the times given above are explicitly for the clearly identifiable teaching of RE. Where creative curriculum planning is used, schools must ensure that RE objectives are clear. In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), teachers should be able to indicate the opportunities they are providing to integrate RE into pupils' learning.

- **Coherence and progression.** Whilst schools are expected to make their own decisions about how to divide up curriculum time, schools must ensure that sufficient time is given to RE so that pupils can meet the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus to provide coherence and progression in RE learning. Any schools in which headteachers and governors do not plan to allocate sufficient curriculum time for RE is unlikely to be able to enable pupils to achieve appropriate standards in their RE.

RE in EYFS: Programme of Study

The EYFS describes the phase of a child's education from birth to the end of the Reception year at the age of five. Religious Education is statutory for all children registered on the school roll. The statutory requirement for religious education does not extend to Nursery classes in maintained schools. RE may, however, form a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout the key stage. In the EYFS curriculum, learning does not fit into boxes: play-based and child-centred approaches will encourage the learning to follow where the child's interest and curiosity leads.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)		Key Stage 1
Nursery	Reception	Year 1 and upwards
RE is non-statutory, but teachers may choose to incorporate RE material into children's activities if they choose to.	RE is a compulsory part of the basic curriculum for all Reception age pupils, and should be taught according to this Agreed Syllabus for RE.	RE is a compulsory part of the basic curriculum for all Key Stage 1 pupils, and should be taught according to this Agreed Syllabus for RE.
Early Learning Goals outline what pupils should achieve by the end of Reception year. The National Curriculum is not taught.		The National Curriculum is taught alongside RE
Some settings have children from both Nursery and Reception in an EYFS Unit. Planning will need to take account of the needs and expectations of both age groups.		

What do pupils get out of RE in this age group?

RE sits very firmly within the areas of PSHE development and understanding the world. This framework enables children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships. They will do this through a balance of guided, planned teaching and pursuing their own learning within an enabling environment. They will begin to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own immediate community. Children will have opportunity to develop their emerging moral and cultural awareness.

RE in KS1: Programme of Study

What do pupils get out of RE at this key stage?

Pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should use basic subject specific vocabulary. They should raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

Aims:

The **principal aim of RE** is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

RE teaching and learning should enable pupils to:

A. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews.	B. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews.	C. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.
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End of key stage outcomes

RE should enable pupils to:

A1. Recall and name different beliefs and practices, including festivals, worship, rituals and ways of life, in order to find out about the meanings behind them.	B1. Ask and respond to questions about what individuals and communities do, and why, so that pupils can identify what difference belonging to a community might make.	C1. Explore questions about belonging, meaning and truth so that they can express their own ideas and opinions in response using words, music, art or poetry.
A2. Retell and suggest meanings to some religious and moral stories, exploring and discussing sacred writings and sources of wisdom and recognising the traditions from which they come.	B2. Observe and recount different ways of expressing identity and belonging, responding sensitively for themselves.	C2. Find out about and respond with ideas to examples of co-operation between people who are different.
A3. Recognise some different symbols and actions which express a community's way of life, appreciating some similarities between communities.	B3. Notice and respond sensitively to some similarities between different religions and worldviews.	C3. Find out about questions of right and wrong and begin to express their ideas and opinions in response.

RE in KS2: Programme of Study

What do pupils get out of RE at this key stage?

Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject specific vocabulary. They should be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils should learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant

information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.

Aims:

The **principal aim of RE** is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own

RE teaching and learning should enable pupils to:

A. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews.	B. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews.	C. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.
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End of key stage outcomes

RE should enable pupils to:

A1. Describe and make connections between different features of the religions and worldviews they study, discovering more about celebrations, worship, pilgrimages and the rituals which mark important points in life, in order to reflect on their significance.	B1. Observe and understand varied examples of religions and worldviews so that they can explain, with reasons, their meanings and significance to individuals and communities.	C1. Discuss and present thoughtfully their own and others' views on challenging questions about belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, applying ideas of their own in different forms including (e.g.) reasoning, music, art and poetry.
A2. Describe and understand links between stories and other aspects of the communities they are investigating, responding thoughtfully to a range of sources of wisdom and to beliefs and teachings that arise from them in different communities.	B2. Understand the challenges of commitment to a community of faith or belief, suggesting why belonging to a community may be valuable, both in the diverse communities being studied and in their own lives.	C2. Consider and apply ideas about ways in which diverse communities can live together for the wellbeing of all, responding thoughtfully to ideas about community, values and respect.
A3. Explore and describe a range of beliefs, symbols and actions so that they can understand different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.	B3. Observe and consider different dimensions of religion, so that they can explore and show understanding of similarities and differences within and between different religions and worldviews.	C3. Discuss and apply their own and others' ideas about ethical questions, including ideas about what is right and wrong and what is just and fair, and express their own ideas clearly in response.

RE in special schools

Planning for RE in special schools

The law says that the agreed syllabus is to be taught to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) 'as far as it is practicable'. Given the complex and individual needs of pupils in special schools, it is important that teachers avoid a 'deficit model' of planning, where the syllabus is watered down, adapting a few units of work, or teaching units for 4-6 year olds to 7-11s or 11-14s. Instead, we should draw on the key ideas of 'discovering, exploring, connecting and responding' from this agreed syllabus. Special school RE should explore authentic and central concepts from religions, on the basis of what will connect with pupils' experiences and enable them to respond.

Assessment, achievement and attainment

The end of key stage outcomes support teachers' planning **for all pupils**.

- Teachers in RE should plan their approach to the whole key stage with the learning intentions of the end of the key stage in clear view.
- Using the learning outcomes for each key question is also essential when planning learning activities for pupils.
- Setting high expectations early in the key stage, in terms of the matters, skills and processes of RE is most likely to enable pupils to reach the highest possible standards for all groups of pupils.

RE and British values

- From September 2014, school inspection in England explores and judges the contribution schools make to actively promoting British values. RE can make a key educational contribution to pupils' explorations of British values, and excellent teaching of RE can enable pupils to learn to think for themselves about them.
- Questions about whether social and moral values are best described as 'British values' or seen as more universal human values will continue to be debated (not least in the RE classroom!), but for the purposes of teachers of RE, the subject offers opportunities to build an accurate knowledge-base about religions and beliefs in relation to values. This in turn supports pupils and young people so that they are able to move beyond attitudes of tolerance towards increasing respect, so that they can celebrate diversity.
- Values education and moral development are a part of a school's holistic mission to contribute to the wellbeing of each pupil and of all people within our communities. The RE curriculum focuses learning in some of these areas, but pupils' moral development is a whole-school issue.

Models of curriculum provision

The syllabus allows flexibility in RE provision and it is for schools to decide how RE should be delivered, ensuring that there is continuity and progression in learning across key stages, and that annual reports of pupils' progress can be provided.

Primary schools will have different approaches to meet different requirements. They may use the following approaches or a combination of them:

- teaching RE as a separate subject either timetabled on a weekly basis or delivered in blocks of time at different points in the school year (ensuring the requirements of the agreed syllabus are met)

- teaching RE within whole-school topics which bring together a number of subject areas (note: if this approach is followed it is essential that RE is planned to meet the objectives of the agreed syllabus)
- teaching some religions separately, or systematically – there are several units that enable this
- teaching RE units thematically i.e. teaching units which draw on more than one religion to explore a religious concept such as sacred books, worship or life as journey – there are units that take a thematic approach
- organising a rolling programme of study units, in order to meet the needs of schools with mixed-age classes, with units planned so that the pitch and expectations for each unit are matched to the different ages and abilities within the class. (For example, a mixed Year 3 and 4 class may be taught a sequence of RE units over a two year cycle, year A and year B, ensuring learning outcomes and activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' different ages and abilities)
- in small schools, the emerging, expected and exceeding learning outcomes in each unit mean that it is also possible to use a spiral curriculum in which the same RE unit is taught across all classes, ages and abilities at a given time, planned so that pitch and expectations are matched to different ages and abilities across the key stage
- some schools use an 'RE Week' or an 'RE Day' to focus learning, then follow up the 'big experience' with linked lessons over several weeks. Such 'big events' planning is demanding of teachers, but can help the whole school to focus and develop the subject. A day is about five hours, so is not, of course, a substitute for a term's work. The key to success is clarity about the RE learning that is planned.

Planning to ensure continuity and progressions

Continuity can be achieved if planning starts from the agreed syllabus and careful attention is paid to what has been taught before and what is likely to follow.

Progression is the development of knowledge and understanding, skills, concepts and attitudes in a key stage and in relation to previous and subsequent key stages. It is achieved through building on earlier learning. It is not just about accumulation of knowledge but concerns a developing ability to deepen understanding by making use of reflective, interpretative and evaluative skills. Pupils should increasingly be challenged to discover the underlying messages of the teaching behind religious traditions, stories, artefacts and ceremonies.

Progression is characterised by the provision of opportunities for pupils to:

- extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and beliefs
- extend their ability to use religious vocabulary and interpret religious symbolism in a variety of forms
- deepen their reflection on questions of meaning, offering their own thoughtful and informed insights into religious and non-religious views of life's meaning and purpose
- explore fundamental questions of beliefs and values in relation to a range of contemporary issues.

Continuity and progression can be achieved when pupils have increasingly challenging opportunities to:

- appreciate the importance of religion in the lives of many people
- grow in understanding of the influence of belief on behaviour, values and attitudes
- consider their own beliefs, values and attitudes
- consider religious perspectives on contemporary social and moral issues.

Religious Education, from Deep Dive suggested questions

Subject Leaders:

- Has the school successfully implemented the Derbyshire and Derby City Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-2025? What difference has this made to the quality of teaching and learning in RE in your

school?

- How is the curriculum for RE organised to ensure the aims of the syllabus can be effectively met?
- Have you been able to undertake any continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to support the new agreed syllabus?
- How are you able to support non-specialist colleagues to teach RE in your school?
- How do you ensure coherence and progression in RE?
- What would you expect pupils to know and understand at the end of each key stage?
- How do you ensure pupils retain the 'sticky knowledge' required to understand religious concepts and different faiths?
- How are you able to make RE relevant to the lives of pupils at the school?
- What contribution does RE make to the promotion of British values across the curriculum?

Class Teacher:

- How did today's lesson build upon pupils' previous knowledge in RE?
- How did you ensure that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, could access the learning?
- How did you think that the Derbyshire and Derby City Agreed Syllabus 2020-2025 has helped you to plan your lessons effectively?
- How did you encourage pupils to understand and develop vocabulary relevant to RE?
- How did you seek to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own lives?

Pupils:

- Do you enjoy RE lessons?
- Why do you think learning about Christianity and other religions is important?
- Do your lessons help you understand how people think and feel about their own religious and non-religious beliefs?
- What do you think religions have in common? How are they sometimes different?
- Do you think you are given enough time to develop and share your own ideas with other pupils?