

**WEST SUSSEX AGREED  
SYLLABUS**

**For**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Agreed on March 10<sup>th</sup> 2008

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**FOREWORD**

**TO BE WRITTEN**

# **PART ONE**

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM**

## **BACKGROUND**

In 1950 the West Sussex Education Authority, in keeping with the requirements of the Education Act 1944, established a Statutory Conference to produce an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Instruction in schools. A new syllabus was produced in 1983 that built on principles that were widely shared in the County and provided the basis for the development in religious education during the 1980s.

The Education Reform Act (1988) provided a new impetus in religious education and as a result a new Agreed Syllabus was developed in 1993 to reflect the requirement of the Act and was revised in 1998 and 2003.

In 2004 the Qualification and Curriculum Authority along with the Department for education and skills published a non-statutory national framework for religious education. The purpose of this framework was to provide guidance for Agreed Syllabus Conferences. This Agreed Syllabus is based on that guidance.

### **The importance of religious education**

Religious education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other religions and other world views that offer answers to questions such as these. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

Religious education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

Religious education encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. Religious education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

# **About Religious Education in the Curriculum**

## **The contributions of religious education to the values and aims of the school curriculum**

### **Supporting the values of the curriculum**

Religious education actively promotes the values of truth, justice, respect for all and care of the environment. It places specific emphasis on:

- pupils valuing themselves and others,
- the role of family and the community in religious belief and activity,
- the celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences,
- sustainable development of the earth.

Religious education also recognises the changing nature of society, including changes in religious practice and expression and the influence of religion, in the local, national and global community.

### **Supporting the aims of the curriculum**

Aim 1: The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.

Religious education should be a stimulating, interesting and enjoyable subject.

The **Knowledge, skills and understanding** outlined in the national framework are designed to promote the best possible progress and attainment for all pupils. Religious education develops independent and interdependent learning. It makes an important contribution to pupils' skills in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). Religious education promotes an enquiring approach in which pupils carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religion. It also enhances the capacity to think coherently and consistently. This enables pupils to evaluate thoughtfully their own and others' views in a reasoned and informed manner.

Aim 2: The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

Religious education has a significant role in the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At the heart of this syllabus for religious education is a focus on ultimate questions and ethical issues. This focus enables pupils to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures and how these impact on individuals, communities, societies and cultures. Religious education seeks to develop pupils' awareness of themselves and others. This help pupils to gain a clear understanding of the significance of religion in the world today and to learn about the ways different faith communities relate to each other.

The Agreed Syllabus aims to promote religious understanding, discernment and respect and challenge prejudice and stereotyping. Religious education is committed to exploring the significance of the environment, both locally and globally, and the role of human beings and other species within it. A central concern of religious education is the promotion of each pupil's self-worth. A sense of self-worth helps pupils to reflect on their uniqueness as human beings, share their feelings and emotions with others and appreciate the importance of forming and maintaining positive relationships.

### **DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF RE**

Religious education has a distinctive character that needs to be recognised and safeguarded. It makes its own contribution to the school curriculum in terms of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes, as well as sharing common ground with other subjects in contributing to the spiritual, moral, cultural, social and mental development of pupils and preparing them for adult life. The subject is concerned to promote, through an encounter with Christianity and other religions, the pupil's search for values, meaning and purpose. Therefore any form of integration of the subject with other areas of the curriculum must not only ensure that the distinctive subject matter of Christianity and other religions and beliefs is adequately covered by the joint syllabus, but also that this specific concern with meaning and purpose finds adequate expression. Care must be taken, too, to ensure that pupils develop the ability to perceive and appreciate the use of simile, metaphor and other forms of both verbal and non-verbal expression used in religious communication.

## The structure of religious education in schools

### **The legal position**

The statutory requirements for religious education were set out in the 1944 Education Act and then amended in the Education Act 1988 and restated in subsequent Acts of Parliament. These requirements apply to all maintained schools but not to nursery schools or further education institutions. The statutory requirements state that:

- religious education shall be provided for all registered pupils;
- parents have the right to withdraw their child from religious education lessons;
- the subject should be taught according to an agreed syllabus in all County maintained and voluntary controlled schools;
- religious education must be non-denominational;
- the agreed syllabus must “reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practice of other principal religions represented in Great Britain.”
- the religious education syllabus is distinct from collective worship;
- the requirement for Special Schools is that they should follow the Agreed Syllabus where practicable.

### **CURRICULUM TIME**

This syllabus needs 5% of curriculum time for years R to 11 in order for it to be taught effectively. This is based on advice given both nationally and by the West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education. The way this time is used is for schools to decide but it should be done in such a way that the religious education is easily identifiable and assists progression and continuity.

The provision of religious education is required in the sixth form of all schools. Although the organisation may change from pre-16 there should be continuing provision for RE in Years 12 and 13 to meet the needs of the students and the requirements of this syllabus.

### **RESOURCES**

Sufficient resources should be provided to deliver the RE curriculum in an exciting and dynamic way, including books, artefacts, ICT and video materials. It should include the provision of human resources to enable educational visits and visitors from faith communities in school. This should be at a level at least equivalent to the level that is provided for foundation subjects.

### **The structure of this syllabus**

#### **The foundation stage (ages 3–5)**

Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (QCA, 2000) sets out expectations of what pupils should learn to meet the early learning goals.



This syllabus describes how religious education can contribute to the early learning goals and provides examples of religious education-related activities.

### **Key stages 1, 2 and 3 (ages 5–14)**

This Agreed Syllabus follows the same broad format as the National Curriculum programmes of study with sections on knowledge, skills and understanding and breadth of study.

### **Knowledge, skills and understanding**

The knowledge, skills and understanding identify the key aspects of learning in religious education. These are described as **Learning about religion** and **Learning from religion**.

**Learning about religion** includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues. Learning about religion covers pupils' knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion.

**Learning from religion** is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion. Pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments.

### **The breadth of study**

The knowledge, skills and understanding specified in the programmes of study are developed through the breadth of study that has three elements:

- the religions studied,
- themes,
- experiences and opportunities.

### **Religions studied**

In order to provide a broad and balanced religious education curriculum and to ensure statutory requirements are met this syllabus requires that:

- Christianity should be studied throughout each key stage
- the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (here regarded as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) should be studied across the key stages as set out below.
- Other religious traditions represented in Great Britain such as the Bah'ai Faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism may also be studied at various stages

In order to aid progression and continuity and to avoid repetition this syllabus requires that:

- Christianity should be taught at each Key Stage and shall comprise more than half the content;
- Introductory courses on Hinduism, Islam and Judaism shall be taught during Key Stages 1 and 2;
- Introductory courses on Sikhism and Buddhism shall be covered in Key Stage 3 or 4 and other religions may be studied in greater depth.

The intention of this syllabus is to ensure that all pupils gain a basic understanding of the principal religions in Great Britain by the time they leave school. The minimum content is set out in the support material to this syllabus to ensure adequate coverage.

This does not preclude schemes of work from covering those specified religions in greater depth or from including content from other religions or beliefs if appropriate. This should not, however, result in pupils being confused by covering too many religions or beliefs in insufficient depth.

The arrangement to teach religions other than Christianity over the Primary and Secondary phase is to enable the greatest flexibility possible while ensuring a broad coverage. To provide a coherent scheme of work religions other than Christianity should be planned over two Key Stages (Key Stages 1 and 2; Key Stages 3 and 4). Schools will need to liaise where necessary to ensure that this is planned effectively.

It is also essential that religious education enables pupils to share their own beliefs, viewpoints and ideas without embarrassment or ridicule. Many pupils come from religious backgrounds but it is recognized that others have no attachment to religious beliefs and practices. To ensure that all pupils' voices are heard and the religious education curriculum is broad and balanced, it is recommended that there are opportunities to consider other religious traditions such as the Baha'i faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism and secular philosophies such as humanism.

Pupils should also study how religions relate to each other, recognising both similarities and differences within and between religions. They should be encouraged to reflect on:

- the significance of interfaith dialogue
- the important contribution religion can make to community cohesion
- the reduction of religious prejudice and discrimination.

### **Themes**

The themes provide the context for 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'. They may be taught separately, in combination with other themes, or as part of religions and beliefs. However the themes are combined, the knowledge, skills and understanding should be covered with sufficient breadth and depth.

**Ages 14–19**

This Syllabus sets out an entitlement for all students to study religious education and to have their learning accredited.

At Key Stage 4 all schemes developed in schools should comply with the principles set out in this syllabus. It is recommended that all pupils follow a syllabus leading towards an accredited course such as GCSE Religious Studies (short or full course). In order to comply with this syllabus schools that choose not to follow a course leading to a GCSE qualification should follow a course that meets the GCSE criteria.

## Attitudes in religious education

While the knowledge, skills and understanding are central to the Agreed Syllabus for religious education, it is also vital that religious education encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others. The following attitudes are critical for good learning in religious education and need to be consistently developed at each key stage of religious education.

### ***Self-Awareness***

In religious education, this includes:

- enabling pupils to feel confident about their own beliefs and identity and to share them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule;
- developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious and spiritual ideas;
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings;
- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour upon other people.

### ***Respect for all***

In religious education, this includes:

- developing skills of listening and willingness to learn from others who are different;
- readiness to look at the positive potentialities of diversity and difference
- sensitivity to the feelings and ideas of others;
- willingness to make a contribution to a diverse society for the well being of all.

### ***Open Mindedness***

In religious education, this includes:

- willingness to seek new truth through learning;
- the ability to engage in argument or disagree reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others)
- the development of attitudes that distinguish between such things as superstition or prejudice and such things as conviction and faith;
- the ability to argue respectfully, reasonably and evidentially about religious, moral and spiritual questions

### ***Appreciation and wonder***

In religious education, this includes:

- developing their imagination and curiosity,
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live, and their response to questions of meaning and purpose.

## LEARNING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: THE CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### **Promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through religious education**

Religious education provides opportunities to promote *spiritual development* through:

- discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, beliefs about God and values such as justice, honesty and truth
- learning about and reflecting on important concepts, experiences and beliefs that are at the heart of religious and other traditions and practices
- considering how beliefs and concepts in religion may be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and related to the human and natural sciences, thereby contributing to personal and communal identity
- considering how religions and other world views perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world, and with God
- valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging
- developing their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues.

Religious education provides opportunities to promote *moral development* through:

- enhancing the values identified within the National Curriculum, particularly valuing diversity and engaging in issues of truth, justice and trust
- exploring the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, sacred texts and guidance from religious leaders
- considering what is of ultimate value to pupils and believers through studying the key beliefs and teachings from religion and philosophy about values and ethical codes of practice
- studying a range of ethical issues, including those that focus on justice, to promote racial and religious respect and personal integrity
- considering the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

Religious education provides opportunities to promote *social development* through:

- considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns
- investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions as well as the common ground between religions
- articulating pupils' own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues.

Religious education provides opportunities to promote ***cultural development***

through:

- encountering people, literature, the creative and expressive arts and resources from differing cultures
- considering the relationship between religion and cultures and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices
- promoting racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.

### **Promoting citizenship through religious education**

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting ***citizenship***

through:

- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
- enabling pupils to think about topical spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly
- exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally
- enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events.

### **Promoting personal, social and health education through religious education**

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting ***personal, social and health education*** through pupils:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by learning about what is fair and unfair, right and wrong and being encouraged to share their opinions
- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle by learning about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality, learning about the purpose and value of religious beliefs and sensitivities in relation to sex education and enabling pupils to consider and express their own views
- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people by learning about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings, considering issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people whose beliefs, views and lifestyles are different from their own.

### **Promoting key skills through religious education**

Religious education provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **communication** through developing a broad and accurate religious vocabulary, reading and responding to a range of written and spoken language (including sacred texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy and worship), communicating ideas using the creative and expressive arts, talking and writing with understanding and insight about religious and other beliefs and values, reflecting critically on ultimate questions of life, using reasoned arguments
- **application of number** through calendrical reckoning, collecting, recording, presenting and interpreting data involving graphs, charts and statistical analysis
- **information technology** through using CD-ROMs and the internet selectively, researching information about religions and beliefs, teaching and practices, using email to communicate and analyse information with people of differing beliefs and cultures, using spreadsheets and databases to handle and present data relevant to the study of religious education
- **working with others** through sharing ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices, collaborating with each other and developing respect and sensitivity
- **improving own learning and performance** through setting targets as part of religious education development, reviewing their achievements and identifying ways to improve their own work
- **problem solving** through recognising key issues to do with religious belief, practice and expression, interpreting and explaining findings and making personal decisions on religious issues (for example, considering their own and religious ideas on good and evil), ethical dilemmas and priorities in life.

### **Promoting other aspects of the curriculum**

Religious education provides opportunities to promote:

- **thinking skills** through helping pupils to research, select, interpret and analyse information from religious traditions, reflect and question their own views and ideas and those of others and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways
- **financial capability** through considering the responsible use of money, the importance of giving and the ethics of wealth, debt, poverty, gambling, business and investment
- **creativity and culture** through considering the scope of human nature, sources of inspiration and discovery, connections between beliefs, values and forms of artistic expression, appreciating the value of cultural distinctiveness and reflecting on beauty, goodness and truth in creative and expressive arts
- **education for racial equality and community cohesion** through studying the damaging effects of xenophobia and racial stereotyping, the impact of conflict in religion and the promotion of respect, understanding and cooperation through dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs
- **effective contributions to scientific, medical and health issues** through exploring philosophical and ethical questions of the origin, purpose and destiny of the cosmos and life within it, exploring the nature of humanity and human interaction with the world, exploring developments in genetics and medicine and their

- ***links to employment, vocations and work-related learning*** through a focus on individual sense of purpose and aspiration in life, and through considering the appropriateness and relevance of religious education to a wide range of employment opportunities and the development of spiritual and ethical issues linked to the world of work
- ***education for sustainable development*** through helping pupils consider the origins and value of life, the importance of looking after the environment and studying the ways in which religious beliefs and teachings have influenced attitudes to the environment and other species.

## Religious education and the general teaching requirements

### **Religious education and inclusion**

Religious education can make a significant contribution to inclusion, particularly in its focus on promoting respect for all. This Syllabus for religious education contains many references to the role of religious education in challenging stereotypical views and appreciating, positively, differences in others. It enables all pupils to consider the impact of people's beliefs on their own actions and lifestyle and also highlights the importance of religions and beliefs and how religious education can develop pupils' self-esteem.

Effective inclusion involves teaching a lively, stimulating religious education curriculum that:

- builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences pupils bring to religious education
- meets all pupils' learning needs including those with learning difficulties or who are gifted and talented, boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils from all religious communities and pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.

To overcome any potential barriers to learning in religious education, some pupils may require:

- support to access text, such as through prepared tapes, particularly when working with significant quantities of written materials or at speed
- help to communicate their ideas through methods other than extended writing, where this is a requirement. For example, pupils may demonstrate their understanding through speech or the use of ICT
- a non-visual way of accessing sources of information when undertaking research in aspects of religious education, for example using audio materials.



### **Religious education and the use of language**

Religious education can make an important contribution to pupils' use of language by enabling them to:

- acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary
- communicate their ideas with depth and precision
- listen to the views and ideas of others, including people from religious traditions
- be enthused about the power and beauty of language, recognising its limitations
- develop their speaking and listening skills when considering religions, beliefs and ideas and articulating their responses
- read, particularly from sacred texts
- write in different styles, such as poetry, diaries, extended writing and the synthesis of differing views, beliefs and ideas
- evaluate clearly and rationally, using a range of reasoned, balanced arguments.

### **Religious education and the use of information and communication technology**

Religious education can make an important contribution to pupils' use of ICT by enabling pupils to:

- make appropriate use of the internet or CD-ROM sources to investigate, analyse and evaluate different aspects of religious beliefs and practices, ultimate questions and ethical issues
- use email or videoconferencing to communicate and collaborate with individuals in different locations, enabling associations to be made between religions and individual, national and international life
- use multimedia and presentation software to communicate a personal response, the essence of an argument or a stimulus for discussion
- use writing-support and concept-mapping software to organise thoughts and communicate knowledge and understanding of the diversity of belief and practice within and between religious traditions
- use equipment such as digital cameras and digital video to bring authentic images into the classroom to support discussion and reflection, and to enhance understanding of the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the lives of local individuals and faith communities.

# **PART 2**

## **THE SYLLABUS**

## **EARLY YEARS AND FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **Introduction**

The Early Years and Foundation stage describes the phase of a child's education from birth to the end of reception. Religious education is statutory for all registered pupils on the school roll. The statutory requirement for religious education does not extend to nursery classes in maintained schools and is not, therefore, a legal requirement for much of the foundation stage. It may, however, form a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout this stage of learning.

During the early years and foundation stage children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects, and visiting places of worship. Children listen to and talk about stories. They are introduced to specialist words and use their senses in exploring religious beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They should be encouraged to reflect upon their own feelings and experiences in talk and by sharing experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

### **The contribution of religious education to the early learning goals**

The Early Learning Goals set out what most children are working towards by the end of the foundation stage. The six areas of learning in the foundation stage are all of equal weight and importance.

They are:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication, language and literacy
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

### **Religious education–related experiences and opportunities**

Religious education can make an active contribution to all six areas but has a particularly important contribution to make to:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- creative development.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

- Children use stories from religious traditions as a stimulus to reflect on their own feelings and experiences and explore them in various ways.
- Using a story as a stimulus, children reflect on the words and actions of characters and decide what they would have done in a similar situation. They learn about the story and its meanings through activity and play.

- Using role-play as a stimulus, children talk about some of the ways that people show love and concern for others and why this is important.
- Children think about issues of right and wrong and how humans help one another.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

- Children have opportunities to respond creatively, imaginatively and meaningfully to memorable experiences.
- Using a religious celebration as a stimulus, children talk about the special events associated with the celebration.
- Through artefacts, stories and music, children learn about important religious celebrations.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- Children ask and answer questions about religion and culture, as they occur naturally within their everyday experiences.
- Children visit places of worship.
- They listen to and respond to a wide range of religious and ethnic groups.
- They handle artefacts with curiosity and respect.
- Having visited a local place of worship, children learn new words associated with the place, showing respect.

### **Creative development**

- Using religious artefacts as a stimulus, children think about and express meanings associated with the artefact.
- Children share their own experiences and feelings and those of others, and are supported in reflecting on them.

## KEY STAGE 1

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING**

#### **Learning about religion:**

1. Pupils should be taught to:
  - a. explore a range of religious stories and sacred writings, and talk about their meanings;
  - b. name and explore a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion, noting both similarities where appropriate;
  - c. identify the importance, for some people, of belonging to a religion and recognise the difference this makes to their lives;
  - d. explore how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and communicate their responses
  - e. identify and suggest meanings for religious symbols and begin to use a range of religious words

#### **Learning from religion:**

2. Pupils should be taught to:
  - a. reflect upon and consider religious and spiritual feelings, experiences and concepts, for example worship, wonder, praise, thanks, concern, joy and sadness;
  - b. ask and respond imaginatively to puzzling questions, communicating their ideas;
  - c. identify what matters to them and others, including those with religious commitments, and communicate their responses;
  - d. recognise how religious teachings and ideas about values, particularly those concerned with right and wrong, justice and injustice, make a difference to individuals, families and the local community.

## **BREADTH OF STUDY**

During the key stage, pupils should be taught the **Knowledge, skills and understanding** through the following areas of study:

### Religions and beliefs:

- a. Christianity
- b. at least one other principal religion

And where appropriate:

- c. a religious community with a significant local presence\*
- d. a secular world view

### Themes

- e. believing: what people believe about God, humanity and the natural world
- f. story: how and why some stories are sacred and important in religion
- g. celebrations: how and why celebrations are important in religion
- h. symbols: how and why symbols express religious meaning
- i. leaders and teachers: figures who have an influence on others locally, nationally and globally in religion
- j. belonging: where and how people belong and why belonging is important
- k. myself: who I am and my uniqueness as a person in a family and community

### Experiences and opportunities

- l. visiting places of worship and focusing on symbols and feelings
- m. listening and responding to visitors from local faith communities
- n. using their senses and having times of quiet reflection
- o. using art and design, music, dance and drama to develop their creative talents and imagination
- p. sharing their own beliefs, ideas and values and talking about their feelings and experiences
- q. beginning to use ICT to explore religions and beliefs as practised in the local and wider community.

\* Religions covered as part of this syllabus are restricted to those in membership of The Interfaith Network for the UK (see support material for further details)

## KEY STAGE 2

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING**

#### **Learning about religion:**

1. Pupils should be taught to:
  - a. describe the key aspects of religions, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others;
  - b. describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected to, beliefs and teachings;
  - c. identify and begin to describe the similarities and differences between religions
  - d. investigate the significance of religion in the local, national and global communities;
  - e. make links between different forms of religious expression and understand why they are important in religion, explaining how religious beliefs and teachings can be expressed in a variety of forms;
  - f. describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions;
  - g. use specialist vocabulary in communicating their knowledge and understanding;
  - h. use and interpret information about religions from a range of sources.

#### **Learning from religion:**

2. Pupils should be taught to:
  - a. reflect on what it means to belong to a faith community, communicating their own and others' responses;
  - b. respond to the challenges of commitment both in their own lives and within religious traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion is shown in a variety of ways;
  - c. discuss their own and others' views of religious truth and belief, expressing their own ideas;
  - d. reflect on ideas of right and wrong and their own and others' responses to them;
  - e. reflect on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives.

## **BREADTH OF STUDY**

During the key stage, pupils should be taught the **Knowledge, skills and understanding** through the following areas of study:

### Religions and beliefs

- a. Christianity
- b. at least two other principal religions

And where appropriate:

- c. a religious community with a significant local presence\*
- d. a secular world view

### Themes

- e. beliefs and questions: how people's beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives
- f. teachings and authority: what sacred texts and other sources say about God, the world and human life
- g. worship, pilgrimage and sacred places: where, how and why people worship, including at particular sites
- h. the journey of life and death: why some occasions are sacred to believers, and what people think about life after death
- i. symbols and religious expression: how religious and spiritual ideas are expressed
- j. inspirational people: figures from whom believers find inspiration
- k. religion and the individual: what is expected of a person in following a religion or belief
- l. religion, family and community: how religious families and communities practise their faith, and the contributions this makes to local life
- m. beliefs in action in the world: how religions and beliefs respond to global issues of human rights, fairness, social justice and the importance of the environment.

### Experiences and opportunities

- n. encountering religion through visitors and visits to places of worship, and focusing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community
- o. discussing religious and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- p. considering a range of human experiences and feelings
- q. reflecting on their own and others' insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning
- r. expressing and communicating their own and others' insights through art and design, music, dance, drama and ICT
- s. developing the use of ICT, particularly in enhancing pupils' awareness of religions and beliefs globally.

\* Religions covered as part of this syllabus are restricted to those in membership of The Interfaith Network for the UK (see support material for further details)



## KEY STAGE 3

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING**

#### **Learning about religion:**

1. Pupils should be taught to:
  - a. investigate and explain the differing effects of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals and communities and societies;
  - b. analyse and explain how religious beliefs and ideas are transmitted by people, texts and traditions;
  - c. investigate and explain why people belong to faith communities and explain the reasons for diversity in religion;
  - d. analyse and compare the evidence and arguments used both when considering issues of truth in religion and philosophy
  - e. discuss and evaluate how religious beliefs and teachings inform answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues;
  - f. apply a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary consistently and accurately, recognising both the power and limitations of language in expressing religious ideas and beliefs;
  - g. interpret and evaluate a range of sources, texts and authorities, from a variety of contexts;
  - h. interpret a variety of forms of religious and spiritual expression.

#### **Learning from religion:**

2. Pupils should be taught to:
  - a. reflect on the relationship between beliefs, teachings and ultimate questions, communicating their own ideas and using reasoned arguments;
  - b. evaluate the challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary world, expressing their own ideas;
  - c. express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views on human relationships personally, locally and globally;
  - d. reflect and evaluate their own and others' beliefs about world issues such as peace and conflict, wealth and poverty and the importance of the environment, communicating their own ideas;
  - e. express their own beliefs and ideas using a variety of forms of expression.

## **BREADTH OF STUDY**

During the key stage, pupils should be taught the **Knowledge, skills and understanding** through the following areas of study:

### Religions and beliefs

- a. Christianity
- b. at least two other principal religions

And where appropriate:

- c. a religious community with a significant local presence\*
- d. a secular world view

### Themes

- e. beliefs and concepts: the key ideas and questions of meaning in religions and beliefs, including issues related to God, truth, the world, human life, and life after death
- f. authority: different sources of authority and how they inform believers' lives
- g. religion and science: issues of truth, explanation, meaning and purpose
- h. expressions of spirituality: how and why human self-understanding and experiences are expressed in a variety of forms
- i. ethics and relationships: questions and influences that inform ethical and moral choices, including forgiveness and issues of good and evil
- j. rights and responsibilities: what religions and beliefs say about human rights and responsibilities, social justice and citizenship
- k. global issues: what religions and beliefs say about health, wealth, war, animal rights and the environment
- l. interfaith dialogue: a study of relationships, conflicts and collaboration within and between religions and beliefs

### Experiences and opportunities

- m. encountering people from different religious, cultural and philosophical groups, who can express a range of convictions on religious and ethical issues
- n. visiting, where possible, places of major religious significance and using opportunities in ICT to enhance pupils' understanding of religion
- o. discussing, questioning and evaluating important issues in religion and philosophy, including ultimate questions and ethical issues
- p. reflecting on and carefully evaluating their own beliefs and values and those of others in response to their learning in religious education, using reasoned, balanced arguments
- q. using a range of forms of expression (such as art and design, music, dance, drama, writing, ICT) to communicate their ideas and responses creatively and thoughtfully
- r. exploring the connections between religious education and other subject areas such as the arts, humanities, literature, science.

\* Religions covered as part of this syllabus are restricted to those in membership of The Interfaith Network for the UK (see support material for further details)

## **Ages 14–19**

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING**

#### **Learning about religion**

1 Students should be taught to:

- a. investigate, study and interpret significant religious, philosophical and ethical issues, including the study of religious and spiritual experience, in light of their own sense of identity, experience and commitments
- b. think rigorously and present coherent, widely informed and detailed arguments about beliefs, ethics, values and issues, drawing well-substantiated conclusions
- c. develop their understanding of the principal methods by which religions and spirituality are studied
- d. draw upon, interpret and evaluate the rich and varied forms of creative expression in religious life
- e. use specialist vocabulary to evaluate critically both the power and limitations of religious language.

#### **Learning from religion**

2 Students should be taught to:

- a. reflect on, express and justify their own opinions in light of their learning about religion and their study of religious, philosophical, moral and spiritual questions
- b. develop their own values and attitudes in order to recognise their rights and responsibilities in light of their learning about religion
- c. relate their learning in religious education to the wider world, gaining a sense of personal autonomy in preparation for adult life
- d. develop skills that are useful in a wide range of careers and in adult life generally, especially skills of critical enquiry, creative problem-solving, and communication in a variety of media.

#### **What should schools do?**

Schools should provide religious education to every student in accordance with legal requirements.

Religious education is a statutory subject for all registered students, including students in the school sixth form, except those withdrawn by their parents.

While there is no legal requirement that students must sit public examinations, students deserve the opportunity to have their learning in the statutory curriculum subject of religious education accredited. Accreditation can be through courses leading to qualifications with the title 'Religious studies' and/or other approved courses that require the study of religion and ethics.

#### **14 -16**

At Key Stage 4 all schemes developed in schools should comply with the principles set out in this syllabus. It is recommended that all pupils follow a syllabus leading towards an accredited course such as GCSE Religious

Studies<sup>1</sup>. In order to comply with this syllabus schools that choose not to follow a course leading to a GCSE qualification should follow a course that meets the GCSE criteria.

### 16-19

At post 16 it is required that all students including those studying in more than one institution should continue to be provided with religious education in line with the requirements of this syllabus. Schools should provide for all students:

- the opportunity to study for at least one course in religious education or religious studies leading to a qualification approved under Section 96 that represents progression from 14–16.
- a course of substance appropriately covering the attainment targets stated in this syllabus which could be delivered as part of a broader course or through conference days.

### **How can schools fulfil their requirement to provide religious education to all registered students?**

Schools should plan for continuity of provision of religious education that is progressive and rigorous from key stage 3 for all students. Schools can make this possible by providing access to discrete courses or units leading to qualifications that meet legal requirements regarding the study of Christianity, and/or other principal religions, and/or other beliefs, world views or philosophies, within the context of a pluralistic society.

All courses should provide opportunities within and beyond school for learning that involves first-hand experiences and activities involving people, places and events (for example the local area, places of worship and community activities, public meetings, and places of employment, education, training or recreation). Students may have different experiences of religious education according to the courses chosen.

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<sup>1</sup> Short or full course approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000

# **PART 3**

## **The attainment targets for religious education**

## ABOUT THE ATTAINMENT TARGETS

The attainment targets for religious education set out the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of key stages 1, 2 and 3. As with the National Curriculum subjects, the attainment targets consist of eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty, plus a description for exceptional performance above level 8. Each level description describes the types and range of performance that pupils working at that level should characteristically demonstrate. Apart from their summative use, these level descriptions can be used in assessment for learning.

The key indicators of attainment in religious education are contained in two attainment targets:

- Attainment target 1: Learning about religion
- Attainment target 2: Learning from religion.

**Learning about religion** includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion. It focuses on beliefs, teachings and sources, practices and ways of life and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues.

**Learning from religion** is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on, and response to, their own experiences and learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments, and communicating their responses.

The level descriptions provide the basis to make judgements about pupils' performance at the end of key stages 1, 2 and 3. In the foundation stage, children's attainment is assessed in relation to the early learning goals. At key stage 4, national qualifications are the main means of assessing attainment in religious education.

Range of levels within which the great majority of pupils are expected to work	Expected attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of the key stage
Key Stage 1            1 – 3	At age 7                    2
Key stage 2            2 – 5	At age 11                   4
Key stage 3            3 – 7	At age 14                   6

## **Assessing attainment at the end of a key stage**

The two attainment targets, **Learning about religion** and **Learning from religion** are closely related and neither should be taught in isolation. Therefore, assessment needs to take place in relation to both attainment targets.

In deciding on a pupil's level of attainment at the end of a key stage, teachers should judge which description best fits the pupil's performance. When doing so, each description should be considered alongside descriptions for adjacent levels.

Teacher assessment is an essential part of the assessment of religious education and is the sole means of statutory assessment throughout key stage 1, 2 and 3.

Schools are required to keep records on religious education for all pupils unless they have been withdrawn by their parents. They must update these records at least once a year.

Decisions about how to mark work and record progress are professional matters for schools to consider in the context of the needs of their children. In retaining evidence and keeping records schools should be guided by what is both manageable and useful in keeping adequate records and planning future work.

Teachers are required to summarise their teacher assessments during the final year of Key Stage 3 for each eligible pupil, taking account of the pupil's progress and performance throughout the key stage, and report this to parents. This assessment should be in the form of an overall subject judgement based on the levels of attainment set out in this syllabus. (see pages 32-34)

In addition to setting out the levels of attainment the report must include a brief account of what the teacher assessment shows about the pupil's progress individually and in relation to other pupils in the same year, drawing attention to any particular strengths and weaknesses.

It is important to note that not all aspects of religious education can be assessed. For example, pupils may express personal views and ideas that, although integral to teaching and learning, would not be appropriate for formal assessment.

## **Attainment targets for religious education**

The level descriptions for **Attainment target 1: Learning about religion** refer to how pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding with reference to:

- beliefs, teachings and sources
- practices and ways of life
- forms of expression.

The level descriptions for **Attainment target 2: Learning from religion** refer to how pupils, in the light of their learning about religion, express their responses and insights with regard to questions and issues about:

- identity and belonging
- meaning, purpose and truth
- values and commitments.

### **Level 1**

#### **Attainment target 1**

Pupils use some religious words and phrases to recognise and name features of religious life and practice. They can recall religious stories and recognise symbols, and other verbal and visual forms of religious expression.

#### **Attainment target 2**

Pupils talk about their own experiences and feelings, what they find interesting or puzzling and what is of value and concern to themselves and to others.

### **Level 2**

#### **Attainment target 1**

Pupils use religious words and phrases to identify some features of religion and its importance for some people. They begin to show awareness of similarities in religions. Pupils retell religious stories and suggest meanings for religious actions and symbols. They identify how religion is expressed in different ways.

#### **Attainment target 2**

Pupils ask, and respond sensitively to, questions about their own and others' experiences and feelings. They recognise that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer. In relation to matters of right and wrong, they recognise their own values and those of others.

### **Level 3**

#### **Attainment target 1**

Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe some key features of religions, recognising similarities and differences. They make links between beliefs and sources, including religious stories and sacred texts. They begin to identify the impact religion has on believers' lives. They describe some forms of religious expression.

#### **Attainment target 2**

Pupils identify what influences them, making links between aspects of their own and others' experiences. They ask important questions about religion and beliefs, making links between their own and others'



responses. They make links between values and commitments, and their own attitudes and behaviour.

#### **Level 4**

##### Attainment target 1

Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, practices, beliefs, ideas, feelings and experiences. They make links between them, and describe some similarities and differences both within and between religions. They describe the impact of religion on people's lives. They suggest meanings for a range of forms of religious expression.

##### Attainment target 2

Pupils raise, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. They apply their ideas to their own and other people's lives. They describe what inspires and influences themselves and others.

#### **Level 5**

##### Attainment target 1

Pupils use an increasingly wide religious vocabulary to explain the impact of beliefs on individuals and communities. They describe why people belong to religions. They understand that similarities and differences illustrate distinctive beliefs within and between religions and suggest possible reasons for this. They explain how religious sources are used to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues, recognising diversity in forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression, within and between religions.

##### Attainment target 2

Pupils ask, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments, relating them to their own and others' lives. They explain what inspires and influences them, expressing their own and others' views on the challenges of belonging to a religion.

#### **Level 6**

##### Attainment target 1

Pupils use religious and philosophical vocabulary to give informed accounts of religions and beliefs, explaining the reasons for diversity within and between them. They explain why the impact of religions and beliefs on individuals, communities and societies varies. They interpret sources and arguments, explaining the reasons that are used in different ways by different traditions to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues. They interpret the significance of different forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

##### Attainment target 2

Pupils use reasoning and examples to express insights into the relationship between beliefs, teachings and world issues. They express insights into their own and others' views on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth. They consider the challenges of belonging to a religion in the contemporary world, focusing on values and commitments.

## **Level 7**

### Attainment target 1

Pupils use a wide religious and philosophical vocabulary to show a coherent understanding of a range of religions and beliefs. They analyse issues, values and questions of meaning and truth. They account for the influence of history and culture on aspects of religious life and practice. They explain why the consequences of belonging to a faith are not the same for all people within the same religion or tradition. They use some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied, including the use of a variety of sources, evidence and forms of expression.

### Attainment target 2

Pupils articulate personal and critical responses to questions of meaning, purpose and truth and ethical issues. They evaluate the significance of religious and other views for understanding questions of human relationships, belonging, identity, society, values and commitments, using appropriate evidence and examples.

## **Level 8**

### Attainment target 1

Pupils use a comprehensive religious and philosophical vocabulary to analyse a range of religions and beliefs. They contextualise interpretations of religion with reference to historical, cultural, social and philosophical ideas. They critically evaluate the impact of religions and beliefs on differing communities and societies. They analyse differing interpretations of religious, spiritual and moral sources, using some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied. They interpret and evaluate varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

### Attainment target 2

Pupils coherently analyse a wide range of viewpoints on questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. They synthesise a range of evidence, arguments, reflections and examples, fully justifying their own views and ideas and providing a detailed evaluation of the perspectives of others.

## **Exceptional performance**

### Attainment target 1

Pupils use a complex religious, moral and philosophical vocabulary to provide a consistent and detailed analysis of religions and beliefs. They evaluate in depth the importance of religious diversity in a pluralistic society. They clearly recognise the extent to which the impact of religion and beliefs on different communities and societies has changed over time. They provide a detailed analysis of how religious, spiritual and moral sources are interpreted in different ways, evaluating the principal methods by which religion and spirituality are studied. They synthesise effectively their accounts of the varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

### Attainment target 2

Pupils analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments. They give independent, well informed and highly reasoned

insights into their own and others' perspectives on religious and spiritual issues, providing well-substantiated and balanced conclusions.

## **PUPILS' WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

### **Performance descriptions in religious education**

These performance descriptions outline early learning and attainment before level 1 in eight levels, from P1 to P8.

The performance descriptions can be used by teachers in the same way as the level descriptions in the Agreed Syllabus to:

- decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts
- develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long, medium and short-term planning
- track linear progress towards attainment at level 1
- identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across their subjects
- record pupils' overall development and achievement, for example, at the end of a year or a key stage.

### **Performance descriptions across subjects**

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that some pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts.

P1 (i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, for example, startling at sudden noises or movements. Any participation is fully prompted.

P1 (ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, for example, becoming still in response to silence. They may give intermittent reactions, for example, vocalising occasionally during group celebrations and acts of worship.

P2 (i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, for example, briefly looking around in unfamiliar natural and man-made environments. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, for example, leaning towards the source of a light, sound or scent. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, for example, touching a range of religious artefacts and found objects in partnership with a member of staff.

P2 (ii) Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, for example, showing that

they have enjoyed an experience or interaction. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, for example, becoming quiet and attentive during a certain piece of music. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, for example, repeating a simple action with an artefact. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, for example, performing gestures during ritual exchanges with another person performing gestures.

P3 (i) Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, for example, prompting a visitor to prolong an interaction. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, for example, stroking or shaking artefacts or found objects. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, for example, when vocalising in a quiet place. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, for example, following a familiar ritual and responding appropriately.

P3 (ii) Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, for example, prompting an adult to sing or play a favourite song. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, for example, celebrating the achievements of their peers in assembly. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, for example, choosing to participate in activities. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, for example, contemplating the flickering of a candle flame. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example, passing an artefact to a peer in order to prompt participation in a group activity.

### **Performance descriptions in religious education**

From level P4 to P8, many believe it is possible to describe pupils' performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in RE. The descriptions provide an example of how this can be done.

P4 Pupils use single elements of communication, for example, words, gestures, signs or symbols, to express their feelings. They show they understand 'yes' and 'no'. They begin to respond to the feelings of others, for example, matching their emotions and laughing when another pupil is laughing. They join in with activities by initiating ritual actions or sounds. They may demonstrate an appreciation of stillness and quietness.

P5 Pupils respond appropriately to simple questions about familiar religious events or experiences and communicate simple meanings. They respond to a variety of new religious experiences, for example, involving music, drama, colour, lights, food, or tactile objects. They take part in activities involving two or three other learners. They may also engage in moments of individual reflection.

P6 Pupils express and communicate their feelings in different ways. They respond to others in group situations and cooperate when working in small groups. Pupils listen to, and begin to respond to, familiar religious stories, poems and music, and make their own contribution to celebrations and festivals. They carry out ritualised actions in familiar circumstances. They show concern and sympathy for others in distress, for example, through gestures, facial expressions or by offering comfort. They start to be aware of their own influence on events and other people.

P7 Pupils listen to and follow religious stories. They communicate their ideas about religion, life events and experiences in simple phrases. They evaluate their own work and behaviour in simple ways, beginning to identify some actions as right or wrong on the basis of the consequences. They find out about aspects of religion through stories, music or drama, answer questions and communicate their responses. They may communicate their feelings about what is special to them, for example, using role play. They begin to understand that other people have needs and to respect these. They make purposeful relationships with others in group activity.

P8 Pupils listen attentively to religious stories or to people talking about religion. They begin to understand that religious and other stories carry moral and religious meaning. They are increasingly able to communicate ideas, feelings or responses to experiences or to retell religious stories. They communicate simple facts about religion and important people in religions. They begin to realise the significance of religious artefacts, symbols and places. They reflect on what makes them happy, sad, excited or lonely. They demonstrate a basic understanding of what is right and wrong in familiar situations. They are often sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and show respect for themselves and others. They treat living things and their environment with care and concern.

These "P Levels" are taken from the QCA document " Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties – Religious Education." The full document is available from QCA.