



Religious Education Policy

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Why is RE important?

Religion and belief inform our values and are reflected in what we say and how we behave. RE is an important subject in itself, developing an individual's knowledge and understanding of the religion and belief, which form part of contemporary society. 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 can develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, of other principal religions, other religious traditions and worldviews that offer answers to questions such as these. RE also contributes to pupils' personal development and well-being and to community cohesion by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society. RE can also make important contributions to other parts of the school curriculum such as citizenship, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE education), the humanities, education for sustainable development, thinking skills and others. It offers opportunities for deep personal reflection and spiritual development, deepening the understanding of the significance of religion in the lives of others – individually, communally and cross-culturally.

Why have an Agreed Syllabus?

The Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for RE has four purposes, which are parallel to the four main purposes of the National Curriculum.

1. To establish an entitlement. The Agreed Syllabus secures for all pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, religion, gender, differences in ability and disabilities, an entitlement to learning in RE. This contributes to their developing knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes, which are necessary for their personal fulfilment and development as active and responsible citizens.
2. To establish standards. The Agreed Syllabus makes expectations for learning and attainment explicit to pupils, parents, teachers, governors, employers and the public, and establishes standards for the performance of all pupils in RE. These standards may be used to set targets for improvement and measure progress towards those targets.
3. To promote continuity and coherence. The Agreed Syllabus for RE contributes to a coherent curriculum that promotes continuity. It facilitates the transition of pupils between schools and phases of education and can provide foundations for further study and lifelong learning.
4. To promote public understanding. The Agreed Syllabus for RE will increase public understanding of, and confidence in, the work of schools in RE. Through the SACRE, the religious communities of Lancashire have been involved in its development. This is part of the mission of Lancashire SACRE.

Aims for the school curriculum

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:
 - Describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals;
 - Identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews; and
 - Appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:
 - Explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;
 - Express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues; and
 - Appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.
3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:
 - Find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively;
 - Enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all;
 - Articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

How does our syllabus address pupils' needs?

This Agreed Syllabus seeks to support children and young people in reflecting upon, developing and affirming their own beliefs, values and attitudes through the exploration of shared human experience and of the place and significance of religion in the contemporary world. In this, RE should enable children and young people to:

- be aware that human life is not merely material life, and be open to the possibility of transcendent or spiritual life, exploring such experiences in their own lives and the lives of others;
- approach sensitively and respectfully the beliefs, actions and feelings of all people, so that they can take full part in building a more cohesive community where people of different religions and no religion can live well together;
- understand the relationships between the individual and the community in religious life;
- develop appropriate ways of communicating their own thoughts, feelings and responses; and
- apply these insights to the development of their own beliefs, values and attitudes.

What is the Lancashire Field of Enquiry?

Life is sometimes described as a journey, a search for meaning and purpose. This Agreed Syllabus seeks to support children and young people in reflecting upon, developing and affirming their own beliefs, values and attitudes through the exploration of shared human experience and of the place and significance of religion in the contemporary world. Lancashire pupils are supported by this syllabus to be equipped in their search for personal meaning.

In this, RE should enable children and young people to:

- Be aware that human life is not merely material life, and be open to the possibility of transcendent or spiritual life, exploring such experiences in their own lives and the lives of others;
- approach sensitively and respectfully the beliefs, actions and feelings of believers;
- Understand the relationships between the individual and the community in religious life;

- Develop appropriate ways of communicating their own thoughts, feelings and responses; and
- Apply these insights to the development of their own beliefs, values and attitudes.

The Lancashire Field of Enquiry model continues to be central to this syllabus, ensuring meaningful and child centred RE for our pupils. The key question for teachers as they create opportunities for learning must constantly be 'How will this help my pupils in their search for meaning?' It secures the syllabus' principle aim 'to support pupils' personal search for meaning by engaging enquiry into the question "What is it to be human?" exploring answers offered by religion and belief.

At the centre is the question 'What does it mean to be human?'

The exploration then requires the following four areas:

- Shared human experience - the nature of human being.
- Living religious tradition - principal religious traditions encountered in the world.
- Beliefs and values - which lie at the heart of these traditions.
- The search for personal meaning – a lifelong quest for understanding.

The four areas in more detail:

Shared Human Experience:

This refers to those inclusive experiences, common to all human beings, which raise questions of meaning, purpose, identity, origins, destiny, value and authority. These experiences include love and loss, thankfulness and despair, community and solitude. The questions that these experiences raise for all humans, religious and non-religious, include:

- Why do we look up to certain people in our society?
- What would the ideal community be?
- What do we mean by 'being fair'?
- Is death the end?
- Should death affect the way we live our lives?

This may be seen as the 'we' aspect of the field of enquiry and delivery often starts from here with pupils involved in selecting questions to explore.

Living Religious Tradition:

This refers to the ways in which people who are, for example, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Jews or Sikhs follow their religions and their ways of life today. While planning ask 'How does this relate to the lives of people who follow religion and secular beliefs today? For example:

- Many Muslims today follow Muhammad's example by reading about stories of the Prophet in the Hadiths.
- The Khalsa [baptised Sikhs], the story of Baisaki, symbols and names [Kaur, Singh] all relate to many Sikh's identity.
- Examples of Christian prayer – in Jesus' life and how this relates to Christians today.
- Humanist naming ceremonies to welcome babies into our society.

Beliefs and Values:

This refers to the beliefs and values that lie at the heart of the ways of life and religious practices of the faiths studied – as identified by members of the faith communities. Teachers need to identify a 'theological nugget' that lies at the heart of this aspect of the Field of Enquiry, which is expressed by the living religious tradition. In the original version of this syllabus, this was where the planning started from to ensure depth. For example:

- Many Muslims believe that Allah chose Muhammad to be the perfect role model, and excellent exemplar [although no one is perfect except Allah] for humans to follow.
- The belief held by many Sikhs that the Great Guru [God] expects service to others [sewa] as part of everyday living.
- Most Christians believe that God is a compassionate Father and is there for them to turn to.
- Many Humanists believe that this life is all we have, and that we should live it as well as we can.

The Search for Personal Meaning:

This refers to the development of the sense of personal meaning for every pupil – how have the insights derived from the other three aspects of the field of enquiry, shared human experience, living religious tradition and their beliefs and values, aided the development of my beliefs, values and attitudes and search for meaning?

How does our school decide which religions to study?

The Agreed Syllabus affirms the legal basis of RE and gives guidance for our school in determining which religions are to be studied. To make sure the requirements are met and the curriculum is broad and balanced:

- Christianity is studied throughout each key stage.
- The other principal religions represented in Great Britain (Buddhism, Hindu Dharma, Islam, Judaism and Sikh Dharam) are the focus of a progressed study between the ages of 5 and 16.

As a school we realise it is also essential that RE enables pupils to share their own beliefs, viewpoints and ideas without embarrassment or ridicule. Many pupils come from religious backgrounds but others have no attachment to religious beliefs and practices. To ensure that all pupils' voices are heard and the RE curriculum is broad and balanced; we also provide opportunities for all pupils to study:

- Other religious traditions, which are appropriate to our local community.
- Secular philosophies such as humanism.

We also use census information for Lancashire as one part of the data that decides which religions our children will study.

Key Stage	Key question	Samples of focus questions
EYFS	YR: Where do we belong?	E.g. What does it mean to belong? What is a neighbour? Who are our neighbours and how should we treat them? Where are special places in our community? How do special times help us belong? How do we show that we belong? What are our community symbols?
One	Yr1: What do people say about God?	E.g. What is God like/ Where is God? What stories are told about God? How do we find out about God? What do people do because they believe in God?
	Yr2: How do we respond to the things that really matter?	E.g. What is worship? What matters most to us? What makes us go 'wow' or makes us think hard? Why do some people have religious rituals? How and why is celebrating and remembering important in religion and worship?
Two	Y3: Who should we follow?	E.g. What is a leader? Can we learn from the life of people who started a religion? What is a powerful person? Who should we follow?
	Y4: How should we live our lives?	E.g. What do religions say about doing good? Why are some occasions sacred to believers? What does it mean to do our duty? What is expected of a person in following a religion or belief?
	Y5: Where can we find guidance about how to live our lives?	E.g. What can stories teach us? How do holy words guide people in their lives? Are religious stories meant to be true? What is wisdom – can words from long ago help us be wise? What sort of writings are found in religion? Do people have to follow every word of their holy books? Can we learn from how some people treat their holy books?
	Y6: Is life like a journey?	E.g. Is life like a journey? If life is a journey, where does it lead? What is a good life? Should we prepare for the future? Is there a map for our journey? Who to travel with? What is death? What to celebrate on the way?

Religious Education and our Early Years Foundation Stage

Religious Education is a statutory requirement for all pupils registered on the school roll, including those children in EYFS in reception classes. Although this legal requirement does not extend to children under compulsory school age, it is good practice for all early years' settings to teach children to respect and celebrate each other's differences by developing an understanding of diversity beyond their immediate family experience. The promotion of equality, diversity and British values is at the heart of our early years' settings.

Although Religious Education is distinct from the Early Years Framework and must be taught in line with this agreed syllabus it can also make an active contribution to all areas of learning and development. In particular it can support development within:

- Personal, social and emotional development.
- Communication, language and literacy.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

During the EYFS children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of: special people, books, festivals and celebrations, places, objects and visiting places of worship. They are introduced to a range of religious words and use all their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect on their own feelings and experiences and use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage planning often uses topics or themes to connect learning so that learning is exciting, engaging and responds to children's interests. The following are examples of how religious experiences are used in our school help to support the Early Years Framework:

- Children reflect on feelings and experiences associated with, for example weddings, birth ceremonies, death of a pet, special times at school. They apply this learning in a range of child initiated contexts e.g. role play, small world, creative area.
- Children express responses to sad and happy occasions e.g. Remembrance Day, Comic Relief day. They are confident to share their ideas, experiences, artefacts, and express feelings. They can talk confidently about their own customs and practices.
 - Children use some stories from religious traditions as a stimulus to reflect on their own feelings, behaviour and experiences and explore them in various ways. Using story as a stimulus, children reflect on the words and actions of characters and decide what they would have done in a similar situation.
 - Children think about issues of right and wrong within the school environment and how humans help one another. They recognise leaders and religious visitors and know how to behave and talk to them respectfully.
 - Children listen to, consider and talk about the meaning of stories that teach the importance of kindness and friendship.
 - Using role-play (e.g. vets, hospital, baby clinic) as a stimulus, children talk about some of the ways people show care and concern for others and why it is important.

Assessment:

There is a scale based on end-of-key-stage statements, which takes account of the forms of assessment in R.E. The scale comprises of two attainment targets:

Attainment target 1 – Knowing about and understanding religions and world views

Attainment target 2 – Expressing and communicating ideas related to religions and worldviews

The subject leader will provide the teachers with the necessary assessment documents for each religion, provided by the Lancashire agreed Syllabus, so that they make judgements on the children as to whether they are at ARE (age related expectation) or BLW (below age related expectations).

Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy:

The subject leader will undertake the following roles:

- Support colleagues in the development of their plans and their confidence and competence in teaching R.E.
- Keep informed of SACRE discussions and decisions by the annual SACRE report. •
- Review planning and assessment
- Raise the profile of the subject throughout school
- Specify, order and maintain resources across the school
- Write an annual action plan, outlining how the subject will move forward and aim to raise standards • Keep up to date with developments in R.E. through reading and training, and share relevant information with colleagues
- Liaise with colleagues to inform future professional development requirements and plan for in service training where necessary

Role of the Class Teacher

- Teach a broad and balanced curriculum, which promotes pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- To take advantage of training opportunities.
- To plan effectively for RE, liaising with co-ordinator when necessary.
- To analyse progress data in conjunction with assessment co-ordinator and suggest interventions

The Head Teacher and Governing Body

The Head Teacher and Governing Body provide support for the RE Coordinator to fulfil their role, as outlined above. They will provide support by:

- Ensuring teachers are able to deliver the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus by having access to the appropriate training and resources necessary;
- Providing opportunities for the RE Leader to work with staff to plan and deliver lessons for the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus.

Resources:

Topic led resources are stored in the central resource area.

Withdrawal:

Although parents have the right to withdraw their children from the teaching of religious education very few do. We feel religious education study contributes significantly to the development of the whole child. The school will comply with any request for withdrawal.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if necessary.