



Understanding Religious Education

An information leaflet



for students, parents and carers



Introduction

Sometimes parents and carers have concerns about the teaching of religious education (RE). They may think that the RE taught in schools today is like the 'Scripture' or 'Religious Instruction' lessons that they may have experienced when they were at school. Nothing could be further from the truth. The principle purpose of RE today is to help pupils to understand themselves and the world around them, including people who may have very different cultures and beliefs from their own. It helps them to learn respect for themselves, for others and for the place in which they live, as well as awareness that, for many of those around them, this may also include respect for God. Religion and belief have an impact on people's values, attitudes, words and actions in their personal, work and social life in local, national and international contexts. RE teaching promotes the wellbeing of each child and also supports community cohesion.

The legal status of RE

The law requires that every maintained school in England must provide RE for all registered pupils at the school (*except to those withdrawn by their parents). The guidance on the RE provided in each local authority (LA) is contained in a Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) that reflects the religious and faith communities of the local area. In all maintained schools RE must be taught according to either the LAS, or in accordance with the school's designated denomination or faith.

In each LA the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is charged with ensuring the quality of provision for RE (and also of collective worship) in local schools and the effectiveness of support for its teaching. SACRE is also able to respond to parental/ carer concerns about the provision of RE in a local school.

** Withdrawal from RE*

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from parts or all of the RE curriculum. We hope however that in the first instance School would be able to discuss with parents their particular concerns

The purposes of RE

RE explores challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human through:

- Developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of principal religions, including Christianity, other traditions and world views, including secular perspectives. Offering opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development .
- Enhancing pupils' awareness of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures . Encouraging pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning .
- Challenging pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses . Encouraging pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging.
- Helping children to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens of the global community. Enabling pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own , helping to combat prejudice...

RE supports

RE contributes significantly to the school's duty to promote the wellbeing of its pupils. It is particularly relevant to wellbeing in the relational, emotional, social, moral, intellectual, economic and spiritual aspects of life, and promotes the holistic development of each child through:

- *Spiritual development*, for example by promoting discussion and reflection on key questions of meaning and truth, such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, and beliefs about God.
- *Moral development*, for example by helping young people to explore the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, guidance from religious leaders and sacred texts.
- *Social development* and provides opportunities for pupils to express their own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues .
- *Cultural development* through enabling pupils to engage with people, literature, arts and resources from differing cultures.

Syllabus

Early Years Foundation Stage

Including religious education in EYFS offers opportunities to meet the requirements of the early learning goals and provides pupils with some valuable learning experiences and strong foundations to build on later in religious education. Its purpose should aim to:

- build on what pupils already know, understand and can do;
- be inclusive of all races, cultures, religions, needs, abilities and backgrounds, by ensuring the careful use of language, books and activities;
- offer wide experiences and activities which provide opportunities to learn about and learn from religions;
- offer opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and involve a multi-sensory approach.

During the EYFS, children may:

- begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, stories, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship;
- listen to and talk about stories, to be introduced to religious words;
- use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression;
- reflect on their own feelings and experiences and be encouraged to ask big questions.
- use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

Areas of Learning	Opportunities for religious education might include:
Personal, and social emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring similarities and differences of those in the class, local and wider community. • developing awareness and understanding of themselves as unique individuals: their needs and their feelings. • developing awareness and understanding of others and their uniqueness. • learning about the influences religious beliefs can have on an individual's life and behaviour. • exploring belonging and a sense of community. • developing attitudes of care and acceptance, respect and fairness towards others. • developing skills such as communication, questioning, investigation, reflection and empathy. • celebrating special times and events such as birthdays, baptism, Hanukkah, Eid, Diwali, Christmas, Chinese New Year and Easter.
Communication and language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening to stories from religious books and traditions. • communicating orally or in song, feelings and thoughts about God, people and the world.
Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key words relating to religions and experiences including visits to places of worship. • composing, using and thinking about the words of simple prayers.
Understanding of the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hearing some creation stories such as that found in the Bible. • raise awareness and reflecting on how we rely on the world's resources. • becoming aware of seasonal change and celebrating a harvest • looking at different festivals. • developing awareness of the world at large and reflecting on the richness in diversity – religious food and feasts; costume; special buildings, objects and artefacts.
Creative development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening to and singing songs from various religions and cultures. • making music and using it as a background for storytelling. • designing and making special objects including religious artefacts; Cooking religious foods / Making religious masks / Wearing religious clothes or costumes.

Syllabus

Key Stage One

Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils explore Christianity and two of the principal religions in this country. They encounter a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. To help them learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children and their families.

Key Stage One, Explore a range of religious stories and sacred writings and talk about their meanings. Naming and exploring a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion, noting similarities where appropriate. They identify the importance, for some people, of belonging to a religion and recognise the difference this makes to their lives and explore how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed through the arts. Children begin to identify and suggest meanings for religious symbols and begin to use a range of religious words.

During this key stage pupils engage with the following themes:

- What people believe about God, humanity and the natural world?
- How and why some stories are sacred and important in religion?
- How and why celebrations are important in religion?
- How and why symbols express religious meaning?
- Figures who have an influence on others locally, nationally and globally in religion;.
- Where and how people belong and why belonging is important.
- Who I am and my uniqueness as a person in a family and community.

Examples of Key Questions	Learning about CHRISTIANITY	Learning about JUDAISM	Learning about ISLAM
What do followers of this religion believe?	<p>God, using Old and New Testament sources: creator, loving, caring, having authority .</p> <p>Jesus: birth, aspects of life and teaching, effect on others then and now, aspects of Easter.</p>	<p>God: stories from the Torah: creator, loving, caring, having authority .</p> <p>Shema.</p>	<p>Belief in one true God (Allah) .</p> <p>Nature of Allah through some of the 99 names .</p> <p>Beliefs about creation.</p>
Why are some people important to followers of this religion?	<p>The role of the clergy.</p> <p>The Apostles and St Bede or another North Eastern Saint.</p>	<p>Aspects of the life of Moses and others: for example Abraham, Joseph and Esther.</p> <p>The role of the rabbi.</p>	<p>Aspects of the life of Muhammad (peace be upon him) prophet of Allah .</p> <p>The role of the Imam.</p>
What does this religion teach?	<p>The Bible: special book for Christians, source of authority , teaching and help .</p> <p>Love, caring, trust, forgiveness: stories from the Old and New Testaments, for example Joseph, The Lost Sheep.*</p>	<p>The Torah: rules, values and stories, and the significance to Jewish people.</p>	<p>Qur'an: revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him).</p> <p>Importance of how it is used, treated and stored. Source of authority and teaching.</p> <p>Words and meaning of some portions of the Qur'an .</p> <p>The 'Shahadah'.</p>

Syllabus

Key Stage Two

Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils learn about Christianity and three other religions, recognising the impact of religion and belief locally, nationally and globally. They make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion and learn about sacred texts. Pupils begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions and beliefs and the importance of dialogue between them. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and valuing what is good and true.

Pupils encounter religion through visitors and visits to places of worship, focusing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community. During key stage two, pupils engage with the following themes and questions:-

- How people's beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives and what sacred texts and other sources say about God, the world and human life?
- Where, how and why people worship, including at particular sites and how religious families and communities practise their faith, and the contributions this makes to local life .
- Why some occasions are sacred to believers, and what people think about life after death.
- How religious and spiritual ideas are expressed and what is expected of a person in following a religion or belief.
- How religions and beliefs respond to global issues of human rights, fairness, social justice and the importance of the environment.

Examples of Key Questions	Learning about CHRISTIANITY	Learning about HINDUISM	Learning about BUDDHISM	Learning about ISLAM
What do followers of this religion believe?	<p>Nature of God, as revealed in the Bible: the Trinity.</p> <p>God and creation: caring for the world .</p> <p>God's relationship with human-kind.</p> <p>Jesus birth, ministry, death, ascension incarnation, salvation, resurrection .</p> <p>Teachings and miracles of Jesus.</p> <p>The effect of Jesus then and now.</p>	<p>Aum symbol</p> <p>Trimurti.</p> <p>Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma .</p> <p>Hindu deities: e.g. Rama, Krishna, Ganesha, Lakshmi, Hanuman, Kali,</p> <p>Durga: characteristics of God.</p> <p>Creation.</p>	Four Noble Truths.	<p>Belief in one true God (Allah) .</p> <p>Nature of Allah through some of the 99 names .</p> <p>Beliefs about creation.</p>
Why are some people important to followers of this religion?	<p>Discipleship: the first disciples .</p> <p>Lives of great Christians: St Paul and others.</p> <p>St Cuthbert or another northern saint.*</p>	<p>Avatar</p> <p>MK Gandhi</p>	<p>Life of Gautama Buddha. Teachings and influence on Buddhist life.</p> <p>Dalai Lama or Aung San Suu Kyi.</p>	<p>Aspects of the life of Muhammad (peace be upon him); prophet of Allah</p> <p>The role of the Imam.</p>
How do followers of this religion live?	<p>Belonging and identity: baptism, confirmation, holy communion.</p> <p>Christian belief and practice across the world.</p> <p>Pilgrimage and places of significance.</p>	<p>Belonging and identity: birth, naming, sacred thread ceremony.</p> <p>Family and home life.</p> <p>Samskaras .</p> <p>Values and respect.</p>	<p>Eightfold Path.</p> <p>Values.</p> <p>Life of lay and ordained Buddhists</p> <p>Local or famous figures.</p> <p>The Three Treasures.</p>	<p>Family life and values.</p> <p>Local Muslim communities .</p> <p>Ramadan .</p> <p>Hajj.</p>
Celebrations	Harvest; Christmas; Easter; Pentecost; Ascension:	Diwali Holi; Raksha Bandhan.	Bodhi Day . Wesak . Parinirvana.	Eid-ul-Fitr Eid-ul-Adha.

For further information please see links below:

The latest national guidance on RE:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf

Religious Education Council of England and Wales:

<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/>

North Tyneside Religious Education Syllabus:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ntreligiouseducationsyllabus/>



Leaflet Produced

Nov 2017