



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that every maintained school in England must provide RE for all registered pupils at the school (*except to those withdrawn by their parents).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 books,
- Listen to and talk about stories to be introduced to religious words and concepts.
- Use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression;
- Begin to ask questions and reflect on their own feelings and experiences.
- Use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

The Main focus for the EYFS are

Nursery: Christianity and Hinduism
Reception: Christianity and Judaism

Areas of Learning	Opportunities for religious education might include:
Personal, social and 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, Hanukah, Eid, Diwali, Christmas, Chinese New Year and Easter.
Communication and	<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.
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

Syllabus

Key Stage One

Most Key Stage 1 pupils have a natural curiosity. They ask questions and wonder about life; they show a willingness to use their imagination and they have an intuitive sense of mystery in the world around them. Children are introduced to some of the beliefs and features of a religion and begin to use basic subject specific vocabulary.

In relation to their learning about these religious beliefs and practices, children are given the opportunity to reflect on their own ideas and feelings in relation to their learning.

Children will take part in enquiries, finding out about religious and non-religious beliefs and practices by encountering a variety of sources.

The main focus for Key Stage 1 is:

- Christianity: introduction to beliefs and practices and their impact.
- Buddhism: introduction to some beliefs and practices and their impact.
- Religious Diversity: introduction to the diverse religious and non-religious landscape in our local area.

Learning about Christianity	Learning about Buddhism	Learning about Religious Diversity
Year 1	Year 1	Year 1
<p>What do Christians believe about God ?</p> <p>What can we learn about Christianity from visiting a church?</p> <p>Why are gifts given at Christmas.</p> <p>Why is Jesus special to Christians?</p> <p>What is the Easter Story?</p>	<p>What can we find out about Buddha?</p> <p>How to Buddhists show their beliefs?</p>	
Year 2	Year 2	Year 2
<p>Why is the bible special to Christians?</p> <p>What can we learn from the story of St Cuthbert?</p> <p>How and why is light important at Christmas?</p> <p>What does it mean to belong in Christianity?</p> <p>How do Christians celebrate Easter?</p>	<p>How do Buddhists show their beliefs?</p>	<p>What can we learn about our local faith communities?</p>

Syllabus

Key Stage Two

Most key stage 2 pupils are becoming more aware of themselves and others and the wonder world in which they live. They should be encouraged to be curious and ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Key stage 2 children build on the prior learning in key stage 1 and develop a capacity to extend and deepen the factual knowledge of religious beliefs and practices and begin to recognise local, national and global contexts. They will extend their range of subject specific vocabulary.

In relation to religious materials studied, children develop the capacity to form their own reasoned opinions, identifying relevant information and using examples to back up their own ideas. They develop the capacity to listen to differing views and to see the world through the eyes of others.

The main focus for Key Stage 2 is:

- Christianity: beliefs and practices across the denominations and the impact of these for individuals and communities.
- Hinduism: some beliefs and practices and the impact of these for individuals and communities.
- Judaism: some beliefs and practices and the impact of these for individuals and communities.
- Religious Diversity: the diverse religious and non-religious landscape across our region, including a special study of on the local Muslim community.
- Religious Diversity: similarities and differences within and between religious and non-religious world views through thematic study e.g. about a ritual, the environment or care for others.

Learning about Christianity	Learning about Religion	Learning about Religious Diversity
Year 3	Hinduism	
<p>How and why is Advent important to Christians?</p> <p>What can we learn and Christian worship and beliefs?</p> <p>What do Christians remember on Palm Sunday?</p>	<p>How do Hindus worship?</p> <p>What do Hindus believe?</p>	
Year 4		
<p>What do we know about the bible and why is it important to Christians?</p> <p>Why do Christians call Jesus the light of the world?</p> <p>What do Christians believe about Jesus?</p> <p>Why is Lent an important period for Christians?</p>		<p>How and why do people show care for others?</p> <p>Why do people visit Cathedrals today?</p>
Year 5	Judaism	
<p>What are the themes of Christmas?</p> <p>What do Christians believe about God?</p> <p>Why is the Last Supper important to Christians?</p>	<p>Why is Moses important to Jewish people?</p> <p>Why do Jewish people go to the Synagogue?</p> <p>How are Jewish beliefs expressed in the home?</p>	
Year 6		
<p>What do the Gospels tell us about the birth of Jesus?</p> <p>Why are Good Friday and Easter Day the most important days for Christians?</p> <p>What do we know about Christianity? (exploration through the concepts)</p>		<p>What can we learn about religious diversity in our area?</p> <p>What can we find out about Humanism?</p>

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/>



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