



Religious education

**Programme of study (non-statutory) for key stage 3
and attainment targets**

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Curriculum aims

Learning and undertaking activities in religious education (RE) contribute to achievement of the curriculum aims for all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

The importance of religious education

RE 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 principal religions, other religious traditions, and other world views that offer answers to these challenging questions. 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.

RE 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.

RE encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society and global community. RE 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.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Religious education: Religious education is a statutory subject in the curriculum, and all schools are legally obliged to teach it. Instead of statutory programmes of study at national level, the non-statutory national framework for RE, published by the Department for Education and Skills and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in 2004, offers national guidelines for the subject. The framework is intended to be used by local agreed syllabus conferences for the development of agreed syllabuses for RE, and by faith communities for the development of RE programmes.

The content of this non-statutory programme of study is substantially the same as the key stage 3 element of the non-statutory national framework. The presentation and headings follow the format of the programmes of study for other subjects, to facilitate cross-curricular planning. Schools should use this programme and supporting guidance in the context of their local agreed syllabus or governors' policy.

Community schools and voluntary controlled schools are required to teach RE according to their local agreed syllabus. Voluntary aided schools with a religious character are required to teach RE as determined by their governors in accordance with their trust deed.

1 Key concepts

There are a number of key concepts that underpin the study of RE. Pupils need to understand these concepts in order to deepen and broaden their knowledge, skills and understanding.

1.1 Beliefs, teachings and sources

- a Interpreting teachings, sources, authorities and ways of life in order to understand religions and beliefs.
- b Understanding and responding critically to beliefs and attitudes.

1.2 Practices and ways of life

- a Exploring the impact of religions and beliefs on how people live their lives.
- b Understanding that religious practices are diverse, change over time and are influenced by cultures.

1.3 Expressing meaning

- a Appreciating that individuals and cultures express their beliefs and values through many different forms.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Religions and beliefs: These include systems of thought that are religious and non-religious, theistic and non-theistic, Western and Eastern, Abrahamic and dharmic.

Understanding and responding critically: This contributes to pupils' spiritual and moral development and to their growing confidence, sense of freedom and responsibility. As pupils aged 11 to 14 grow towards cognitive, social and emotional maturity, opportunities to discuss and reflect on issues of difference, similarity and meaning can strengthen their independence and help them to develop a healthy sense of identity.

Exploring the impact of religions and beliefs: The influence of belief can change the world for better or worse. Pupils could consider unexamined assumptions, such as those about race, religion or money and possessions, which underpin decisions and lifestyles. These can be critically explored through discussions about news events, religious stories or school events and the possible motives of the people involved.

Many different forms: These include writing, speaking, silence, art, music, dress, dance, food, ritual, artefacts, relationships, behaviour codes and social action.

1.4 Identity, diversity and belonging

- a Understanding how individuals develop a sense of identity and belonging through faith or belief.
- b Exploring the variety, difference and relationships that exist within and between religions, values and beliefs.

1.5 Meaning, purpose and truth

- a Exploring some of the ultimate questions that confront humanity, and responding imaginatively to them.

1.6 Values and commitments

- a Understanding how moral values and a sense of obligation can come from beliefs and experience.
- b Evaluating their own and others' values in order to make informed, rational and imaginative choices.

RE provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Identity: People can have multiple identities that may be determined by a combination of faith, belief, culture, environment and choice.

Exploring the variety, difference and relationships: This can promote understanding and dialogue, underpin a commitment to respect and inclusion, and help pupils engage creatively and confidently with a diverse world. For example, pupils could explore how practices and beliefs vary within traditions, change over time and are influenced by cultures. This could include taking part in visits, speaker events, web-based investigations, dialogues or community projects that involve understanding differences and seeing similarities.

Ultimate questions: These have no single answer agreed by all religions and beliefs, and face everyone, in the form of ethical, spiritual or philosophical challenges. They can be about the significance and value of human life, the existence of God, the nature of being human, the causes of suffering, or the qualities of a good life. There are many such questions that are considered by most religious and philosophical traditions to be profound issues confronting humanity. Ultimate questions should include pupils' own questions.

Choices: As young people aged 11 to 14 develop their sense of identity, they learn to internalise definitions of right and wrong, and to use them with increasing independence in relation to a range of issues in their family, neighbourhood and world, for example in discussions about material possessions, stereotyping or climate change.

2 Key processes

These are the essential skills and processes in RE that pupils need to learn to make progress.

2.1 Learning about religion

Pupils should be able to:

- a investigate the impact of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies, the reasons for commitment and the causes of diversity
- b 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
- c explain religious beliefs, practices and commitments, including their transmission by people, texts and traditions
- d evaluate how religious beliefs and teachings inform answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues
- e interpret a range of sources, texts, authorities, and forms of religious and spiritual expression from a variety of contexts
- f analyse religious beliefs, arguments and ideas.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Investigate: This could include, for example, investigating the reasons for prayer, and collecting and sorting information on worship rituals.

Commitment: This should include reasons why people might belong to a faith community or subscribe to beliefs or values.

Evaluate: This could include, for example, evaluating the range of religious and moral responses to the question of whether a person should fight in a war.

Interpret: This could include exploring competing interpretations of doctrines and sacred texts, or explaining why a text was written.

Analyse: This could include comparing arguments about, for example, truth, the transmission of ideas and the validity of evidence.

2.2 Learning from religion

Pupils should be able to:

- a reflect on the relationship between beliefs, teachings, world issues and ultimate questions
- b evaluate beliefs, commitments and the impact of religion in the contemporary world
- c express insights into the significance and value of religion and other world views for human relationships personally, locally and globally
- d express their own beliefs and ideas, using a variety of forms of expression, including creative forms and reasoned arguments.



EXPLANATORY NOTES

World issues: This should include issues such as peace and conflict, wealth and poverty, and the importance of the environment.

Ultimate questions: An example of an ultimate question related to a world issue is 'How might the beliefs and attitudes of a community be changed by suffering or by prosperity?'

Evaluate beliefs, commitments and the impact of religion: This should include evaluating their own and others' beliefs about why people belong to faith communities, what challenges and tensions might be caused by belonging to a faith, and about world issues.

Express: This could include responding to moral and religious problems (eg conflict), sharing and questioning assumptions (eg about good and evil), and developing responses to problems (eg about inter-religious or communal relations).

3 Range and content

This section outlines the breadth of the subject on which teachers should draw when teaching the key concepts and key processes.

The study of RE should include:

- a Christianity
- b at least two other principal religions
- c a religious community of local significance, where appropriate
- d a secular world view, where appropriate.

All of the above can be taught through the following 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 expressing spirituality: how and why understanding of the self and human experiences is 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.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Christianity: This should include Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Non-conformist and Pentecostal branches of Christianity, both in Britain and globally.

At least two other principal religions: These include, as listed in the non-statutory national framework, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. By the end of key stage 3 all these principal religions should have been studied in sufficient depth. The Baha'i, Jain and Zoroastrian faiths may also be studied.

A religious community of local significance: This may be included to give a local focus to the study of how religion and belief impact on individuals, families and the community.

A secular world view: This includes, as in the example given in the non-statutory national framework, secular philosophies such as Humanism.

Religion and science: This could include opportunities to look at where religion and science diverge or come together in their interpretation of the world.

Expressing spirituality: This could include exploring human experiences such as suffering. For example, experiences of the Holocaust or genocide could raise questions about people's abiding sense of meaning in the face of pain and fear.

Health: This could include examples of physical, emotional and sexual health, and could be linked to work on, for example, drugs, HIV/AIDS, or specific moral teachings on relationships or on the value of human life.

Relationships, conflicts and collaboration within and between religions and beliefs: This could include exploring differences, understanding reasons for them and identifying compatible strands. Pupils could address differences between branches of a religious tradition, for example differences in worship, doctrine or practice; or differences between secular and traditional religious views on, for example, family life, sexuality, economics or religious pluralism. Collaborative projects, such as local interfaith forums, could be explored and used to form evaluative views on issues.

4 Curriculum opportunities

During the key stage pupils should be offered the following opportunities that are integral to their learning and enhance their engagement with the concepts, processes and content of the subject.

The curriculum should provide opportunities for pupils to:

- a encounter people from different religious, cultural and philosophical groups, who can express a range of convictions on religious and moral issues, where possible
- b visit places of major religious significance, where possible
- c use ICT to enhance understanding of religion
- d discuss, question and evaluate important issues in religion and philosophy, including ultimate questions and ethical issues
- e reflect upon and carefully evaluate their own and others' beliefs and values, using reasoned, balanced arguments
- f use a range of forms of expression to communicate their ideas and responses
- g explore the connections between RE and other subject areas.

It enables pupils to develop **respect** for and **sensitivity** to others

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Use ICT to enhance understanding of religion: This could include using the internet to research places of worship and using email to communicate with people of different faiths in different countries.

Discuss, question and evaluate: This could include opportunities for pupils to develop and express their own questions, share each other's responses and study the answers offered by religions and beliefs. It could include being involved in a local community cohesion project, and identifying and commenting on how beliefs have an impact on life at local community and global levels.

Ethical issues: These could include the difference between right and wrong; the application of principles to issues in crime and punishment, war and peace, family life, relationships, use of money and property, entertainment, employment or technology; and religious and cultural toleration.

Forms of expression: These could include creative and thoughtful use of art, dance, drama, writing and ICT.

Other subject areas: These could include arts, humanities, language, literature, technology and science.

Attainment targets

Attainment target 1: Learning about religion

Level 1

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

Level 2

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.

Level 3

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.

Level 4

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.

Level 7

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.

Level 8

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.

Level 5

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.

Level 6

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.



Exceptional performance

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: Learning from religion

Level 1

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

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

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

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 7

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

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.

Level 5

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

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.

Exceptional performance

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.