

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday 29 June 2022

14:00

White Room, County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford

John Tradewell
Director of Corporate Services
21 June 2022

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Update on Membership**

Committee A – Amy Bayliss-Fox to replace Lydia Bartlett (Salvation Army)
3. **Declaration of Any Other Business**
4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 February 2022** (Pages 1 - 6)
5. **An Update on Key Issues** (Pages 7 - 14)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
6. **NASACRE Update including conference report** (Pages 15 - 18)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
7. **Agreed Syllabus Conference** (Pages 19 - 64)



8. **Media reports on Religious Education** (Pages 65 - 102)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

- a. The RE report card
- b. the Draft Handbook published by the REC on Religion and World views in the classroom: developing a world views approach

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/REC-Worldviews-Project-Draft-Handbook-double-pages.pdf>

9. **The SACRE Budget 2021-2022 & 2022-2023** (Pages 103 - 104)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

10. **Development Plan 2021-2023** (Pages 105 - 108)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

11. **Applications for variation of practice** (Pages 109 - 110)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

12. **Dates of next meetings**

- 16 November 2022
- 1 February 2023
- 28 June 2023

All meetings commence at 2:00pm unless otherwise stated.

Membership

Mohamed Sedky	Vickie Longson
Linda Goodwin	Shaun Miles
Julie Thompson	Maddy Belle
Tajinder Singh	Harold Gurden
G Devadason	Zoe Cahalan
Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf (Chairman)	Vicky Priestley
Sam Kirwan	Philip Atkins, OBE
Dr Laow Panyasiri	Paul Northcott
Mohamed Parekh	Mike Wilcox
Sam Phillips	Ian Horsewell
Lauren Nicholson Ward	Kath Perry, MBE
Judy Wyman	Paul Snape
Gabi Oldfield	Amy Bayliss-Fox

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 2 February 2022

Present: **Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf**

Linda Goodwin, Julie Thompson, Judy Wyman, Gabi Oldfield, Vickie Longson, Vicky Priestley, Philip Atkins, OBE, Paul Northcott, Mike Wilcox, Ian Horsewell and Kath Perry, MBE

Apologies for absence: Tajinder Singh, Sam Kirwan, Mohamed Parekh, Sam Phillips, Lydia Bartlett, Maddy Belle, Zoe Cahalan and Paul Snape

Also in attendance: Mary Gale (SACRE advisor) and Mandy Pattinson (Clerk)

PART ONE

110. Update on membership (if any)

There had been no changes to the Membership since the last meeting.

Julie Thompson informed Members that it was Naw-Rúz, the Bahá'í New Year on 22 March and circulated a copy of their prayer book for information. Julie was thanked for bringing this to the attention members of SACRE.

111. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 17 November 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 17 November 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

It was noted that the SACRE Annual Report had been circulated to members of the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee; NASACRE, the County Council and Entrust (for them to circulate as appropriate).

112. An Update on Key Issues

SACRE considered the report which covered the main issues affecting Religious Education (RE) in Staffordshire since the last meeting. Further to the SACRE considered the report which covered the main issues affecting Religious Education (RE) in Staffordshire since the last meeting. Further to the written report, the following information was provided:

- Westhill legacy project – The project had resumed in October 2021 with seven schools taking part. Mary Gale had been able to visit 3 of the schools and had

received positive feedback. The feedback and comments would be used to support the review of the current Agreed Syllabus (AS)

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses remained virtual. Two schools had been visited and demand seemed to be increasing.
- AREIAC - Mary Gale reported that she had attended a two day on-line RE conference organised by NATRE. Information from this conference would help to provide further resources to support schools in the summer term.
- Following a question on how previous £200 grants were allocated, it was reported that schools were informed of the grants through discussions with Mary Gale when they approached her for advice or guidance. The grants were open to all schools, but it was generally maintained schools who requested support.
- It was reported that Mary Gale's commission to support Staffordshire SACRE had been extended. She would continue to advise SACRE for another 12 months until March 2023.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

113. NASACRE Update

The Chairman reported on the following activities/work which had been undertaken by NASACRE since the last meeting:

- NASACE had continued with online monthly seminars. A World Views seminar would be held next month. All members could register if they wished to join the seminar.
- NASACRE's next annual conference was due to be held on 23 May 2022, in person, in Birmingham. Dr Richard Kueh, the Ofsted lead for RE was due to address the meeting. It was hoped that the SACRE Chair and Advisor would attend.

RESOLVED: That the update report be noted.

114. Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

The Education Act 1996 required Local Authorities to review its locally agreed syllabus every five years. Staffordshire's syllabus was due to be reviewed in 2021. An AS Conference had to be established in order to agree the revised. This would then be formally approved by the County Council.

The SACRE meeting was adjourned in order for the Agreed Syllabus Conference to be convened.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) was convened.

- a) The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 November 2021 were agreed.
- b) Mary Gale updated the Conference on the work undertaken since the last meeting which included:

- Working parties had continued to meet. It was thought that timescales and deadlines would be difficult to meet. It was therefore suggested that the ASC working party would need to meet again before the next scheduled meeting of SACRE and the ASC on June 29th 2021.
- Members were reminded that there was still an opportunity to complete the survey to express their views on the current AS, a link to which was in the report.
- Workshops would continue, so that further evidence could be gathered.
- All the feedback and comments received to date would be considered to support the writing of the revised draft AS by the ASC working party.
- It was agreed that there was some confusion amongst teachers over the purpose of the AS, with some schools presuming that it was a scheme of work with set lesson plans to follow. Many teachers who are not RE specialist feel anxious about teaching RE and look to the AS for support particularly if they have little experience of RE themselves. It was hoped that the revised Agreed Syllabus provide a scaffold to their teaching with appendices providing some examples of class plans etc..This would support teachers in their teaching.
- It was felt that there needed to be a clear and concise Vision' section at the start of the document. The Chairman proposed the following words (see italics) to be added to the draft for consideration at the next ASC working party meeting:

Vision Statement – ‘The role of RE in schools is to help prepare and equip all pupils for life and citizenships in today’s diverse and plural Britain through fostering in each pupil, *an increasing awareness of and sensitivity within the diversity of religious and world views.*’

The following comments were made regarding this suggestion:

- the term ‘sensitivity’ was important.
 - the need to revisit aspects on how to embrace differences was essential particularly after COVID-19.
 - the need to promote diversity and respect for all human beings was noted
 - extremism of any kind should be discouraged.
 - the need for the document to refer to religious and non-religious beliefs/world views was agreed and would be retained.
 - the need for teachers to actively encourage pupils to look at the world in different ways was to be promoted.
- It was agreed that; the assessment section; Early years; and SEND sections, all needed to be extended.
 - The recognition of Ofsted’s education inspection framework regarding Intent, Implementation and Impact needed to be acknowledged.

- British values, as set out in the current syllabus needed to be re-emphasised.
- Climate Change aspects could possibly be considered for inclusion if considered relevant.

Once again information on many of the above could be provided in the appendices.

It was noted that there would be a further meeting of the ASC working party before formal consideration of the revised AS by SACRE and then referred to the County Councils Cabinet Member for formal approval.

If any member had further suggestions, they were encouraged to email Mary Gale, and these would be considered for inclusion in the draft documentation.

RESOLVED:

- a) Each of the four SACRE Committees agreed to the Religious Education Agreed Syllabus Review and the work undertaken to date.
- b) That an additional working group meeting be held on 11 May 2022.

The SACRE meeting formally reconvened.

115. Reflection on the Workforce Census 2021

A workforce census had been completed by schools' country-wide for the Department for Education (DfE). This was an annual task. NATRE had provided SACRE as part of the subscription with a workforce census breakdown for Staffordshire schools on the number of teaching hours allocated to the teaching of RE. This enabled SACRE to reflect on the information especially where schools had reported that they did not '*allocate teaching hours*' to RE.

It was felt that a zero return was probably due to misinterpretation, as some of the schools showing a 0% return were Catholic schools and would obviously teach RE. These school websites indicated that RE was taught. It was thought that possibly the time was being logged under another heading such as Philosophy and Ethics.

It was agreed that Mary Gale would look into this and offer advice to schools if necessary. This would be carried out sensitively.

Mary Gale had provided Entrust with this information for them to consider the best way forward.

RESOLVED: That Mary Gale further investigate the schools with 0% return to clarify the situation.

116. SACRE Budget 2021-2022

SACRE considered the update report on the current 2021/22 budget.

The meeting was informed that there had been a delay in the updating of the budget and that there would be approximately £490 left in the budget at the end of the financial year.

SACRE was informed that Mary Gale had been approached by the Woodlands Federation for support and training in RE following a recent Ofsted inspection. It was felt that they could be offered a £200 grant subject to it being used to support any training needs they had.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the budget position be noted.
- b) That The Woodlands Federation be offered a grant of £200 to support teacher training in RE, the impact of which should be reported back to a future meeting of SACRE.

117. Development Plan 2021-2022

The Development plan contained the SACRE action plan and also gave a RAG rating which estimated risk. It was noted that there had been some improvement in ratings since the last meeting, particularly in ASC working party and engagement with stakeholders.

RESOLVED: That the Development Plan be noted.

118. Applications for variation of practice

There were none on this occasion.

119. Dates of future meetings

Future SACRE dates were noted as per the agenda.

The next meeting of the ASC working party would take place on 11 May 2022 at 3pm, venue to be agreed. Mary Gale to try and book a room at the main Entrust headquarters for this, teachers who had attended previous working party meetings would be invited to attend anytime between 3pm and 5pm.

**Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Chairman**

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
29th June 2022**

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities**

An Update on Key Issues

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters which have either been raised at previous SACRE meetings and which have moved forward or matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

4 Background

4.1 Since the summer term meeting of the SACRE there have been developments in a number of areas which had previously been agenda items for SACRE or which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on these key developments.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised; These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer

Mary Gale 07816374873

Key Issues Report June 29th 2022

I) MEDIA RELEASE 18th May, 2022

School and government performance on religious education failing record number of students, says landmark data review

Neglecting RE leaves ‘gaping hole in the school curriculum’, says Father of the House Sir Peter Bottomley in the wake of the Government’s commitment to level up education across the country.

The number of students taking a Religious Studies GCSE in England has risen by nearly a third in the last decade despite the subject being underfunded and poorly taught in many schools across England, a new ‘state of RE’ data analysis has revealed.

Despite the increase in students taking the subject, no government money has been spent on the subject in the last five years, while many academies fail to offer the high-quality RE provision that according to Ofsted ‘affords students the opportunity to make sense of their own place in the world’.

The comprehensive review of data, carried about by a team from the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC), the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), and RE Today Services, comes from a variety of sources, including an Ofsted subject report, public surveys, school workforce data, freedom of information requests, and interviews with teachers and students. It is the biggest ‘state of RE’ report for five years. We’ve graded the performance of schools, government and the subject itself in a review of five years of data.

The most significant findings are:

- A 50% increase in A-level entries for Religious Studies (RS) since 2003, beating Geography and History
- Higher Attainment 8 scores than average in schools with higher rates of entry for GCSE RS
- 46% of academies without a religious character have reported an increase in time to teach RE

However:

- Almost 500 secondary schools are still reporting zero hours of RE provision in Year 11
- Around 34% of academies are reporting no timetabled RE

Teaching RE is a legal requirement for all schools in England. All maintained schools have a statutory duty to teach RE while academies and free schools are contractually required through the terms of their funding agreement to make provision for the teaching of the subject.

NATRE Research Officer, Deborah Weston OBE, who led the data review, said: “With record numbers of students taking the subject, it is a great shame that RE is being neglected by the Government, and marginalised by some schools, particularly in the academy system.

In the Queen's Speech we saw the Government's commitment to "help every child fulfil their potential, wherever they live". The data has shown us that high-quality RE enables precisely this, being a key marker for both academic achievement and a vital part of young people's development in making sense of their own worldview as part of the diverse and pluralistic nature of belief in the 21st century."

"The planned changes outlined in the Queen's Speech provide a once in a generation opportunity to address most of the issues highlighted in this data. However, without a properly funded National Plan and a system of accountability for high-quality RE under the Government's academy vision for all schools, we risk denying a generation of students access to this vital subject. A high-quality education in religion and worldviews must now be part of their plans to help every young person fulfil their potential in school, society and the world of work."

In March, a parliamentary roundtable met to discuss the future of the subject, with the Father of the House, Sir Peter Bottomley, calling for a 'National Plan' for the subject.

Responding to the latest data, Sir Peter Bottomley said: "Looking at the performance data on this report card, too many young people are not getting a fair deal when it comes to religious education. In neglecting the subject, we leave a gaping hole in our school curriculum. At its best, RE prepares young people for the ethical, moral and religious debates that influence life in modern Britain and the wider world."

The report card summarising the data review can be accessed through Agenda item 7

iii) Central government funding for RE projects

In the period 2016-2021, Religious Education received no central government funding for subject specific projects. During the same period, £387 million was allocated to Music projects, £154 million to Maths projects, £56 million to Science projects, £28.5 million to English projects, and £16 million to Languages projects.

iv) Advice available to support RE in addition to NASACRE and AREIAC

Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC)

Established in 1973, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) brings together over 60 national organisations. These comprise academic and professional associations specialising in religious education, as well as individual religion and belief organisations representative of the range of communities found nationally.

[The Religious Education Council of England and Wales](#)

National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE)

NATRE is the subject teacher association for RE professionals in primary and secondary schools and higher education, providing a representative voice at national level and publications and courses to promote professional development. NATRE's Executive consists of a majority of serving teachers from primary and secondary schools who are elected for a three-year term of service.

[NATRE](#)

RE Today Services

RE Today works in the UK and internationally to give children a broad and balanced education to support them in the world they live in, through the teaching of high-quality RE in schools.

It supports teachers in ALL types of schools through publishing high-quality RE publications, offering consultancy services, curriculum development and by providing professional development opportunities for RE professionals.

[RE Today](#)

v) How does Ofsted Report on the School Curriculum?

What are the implications for RE?

Extracts from Ofsted inspections undertaken in 2021 and 2022 indicates Ofsted's concern for subjects, including RE, that are taught in a way that results in the subject content not being appropriately sequenced. Consequently, the approach adopted fails to help pupils to build on what they already know or effectively prepares them for future learning. Ofsted is also critical of curriculum plans which for particular subjects do not clearly identify the knowledge and skills pupils will learn. Ofsted also criticises schools for having limited opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning or undertake assessment which identifies gaps in pupils learning or content that is misunderstood.

It is recognised these criticisms as ones which apply to RE – the example of Easter was cited, e.g. pupils learn about Easter and this often takes place in the Spring term to coincide with the celebration of the festival. However, often little or none, of the knowledge and ideas associated with Easter are revisited or reinforced for 12 months which leads to most of the taught content being forgotten.

The consequence of this is that pupils do not gain secure knowledge on which teachers can build. Progress thus in lower KS2, upper KS2 and in KS3 is consequently limited because pupils do not have secure knowledge or understanding which can be built on so they may advance to a higher level

vi). Westhill Legacy project- Explore, Engage, Reflect (EER) in conjunction with Youth Net. Summer Term 2021 report.

SACRE have funded this project from the 2021-2022 budget through commissioning the Entrust Minority Ethnic Achievement Service- MEAS- to deliver workshops in conjunctions with Youth Net.

Providing SACRE are willing to release money from its budget, this project will resume in the autumn in October 2022 and continue until December 2022, utilising the 2022-2023 budget.

Update on Christianity the Big Picture conference in conjunction with Youth Net

This project is aimed at key stage 3-years 7, 8 and 9 in High schools.

This conference has been designed to give an overview of Christianity and it covers Worship, Prayer, the Bible, Church, Jesus and Big Questions. It gives KS3 students a

chance to explore, reflect and engage with some of the core themes of Christianity through experiential learning.

This experiential learning is supported with an introduction looking at 'Who is God' and then an opportunity for a Q and A session at the end.

Only one school asked for the RE mini conference and that took place on the 3rd Feb at King Edward's school with Year 8 (108 students). To allow the whole year to access this resource, the conference was delivered twice.

This is a feedback quote from a Humanities teacher

'Very interactive and engaging, lots of places and spaces to reflect, think, provoke thoughts and ideas. It allowed students time to consider their own beliefs and ideas and perhaps challenge preconceptions or misconceptions they may have about the Christian faith.'

Reflections from Youth Net •

We were able to offer a mix of activities to suit visual, kinaesthetic and audio learners. We did this by using videos, work sheets/puzzles, artefacts and matching activities in a lot of the stations.

The event was not without challenges, but we are confident that it was a good opportunity for the students involved. We believe that with a few adaptations it could be even more beneficial to schools.

- Whilst some students struggled with the independent learning (this year group has had a very disrupted few years because of Covid), others really benefited from the chance to explore the themes in a new way and asked lots of questions to further their learning.
- Two of the zones were lighter on interactive material - church and worship. In the future we would combine these 2 zones to create more space and make sure students have enough to engage with in each zone.

Feedback from one of the teachers stated

'It was hard to manage 60 students in the space at one time. This meant that the spaces could be crowded at times and that there were moments where behaviour was hard to manage or students were distracted by each other.'

In the future we feel it would be better to offer the conference for single classes (approx. 30 students) over a single period. This has several advantages:-

schools may be more willing to have the conference if it offers less disruption to the curriculum (i.e. having to take students out of a single lesson rather than a double).

Students will benefit from staff/volunteers being more available to answer questions and offer guidance with the material.

Although students may not be able to make their way through the whole of the booklet, they will be able to move around the zones more freely and less likely to miss out

vii). Continuous Professional Development

Mary Gale continues to support RE leaders in several schools through email, virtual meetings and face to face meetings. This has involved supporting schools in understanding *greater depth* in RE assessment, whole class reading through RE texts, planning and preparation for Ofsted '*deep dives*'.

In addition, Mary continues to support a school to work through the Agreed Syllabus and how Understanding Christianity can dovetail into the AS.

Planning support is needed most. Mary has re written some of the planning to support schools. One topic that needed a refresh was learning about *Sacred Texts* in year 5.

Church of England schools have also asked for support with preparation for their next SIAMS inspection. Mary Gale has facilitated this.

Entrust have approached Mary Gale to run face to face courses in the autumn and spring terms to provide network support for teachers either at the central training centre or in individual schools.

Governors through the Governor Information Pack continue to receive updates on RE in Staffordshire, the status of the AS and the process for the review. They have been encouraged to work in their link governor roles to discuss the impact of the current AS. This information has reached 300 plus schools and over 200 leaders from these school have joined an update webinar where RE was discussed as part and parcel of the information provided. This is unique to Staffordshire as having discussed this at a recent national NASACRE conference it is apparent that many SACRES do not have this avenue to engage so readily with their stakeholders.

viii). Association of Religious Education Inspectors and Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC) and the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) Meetings.

Mary Gale attended a virtual Midlands AREIAC group meeting on 15th March 2022. Items discussed

The story of Harry Potter. Does it have a religious message?

It was suggested that perhaps the best book available which explores the religious ideas, and particularly the Christian values and beliefs which feature in J K Rowling's "Harry Potter" books is, "*How Harry Cast His Spell: The Meaning behind the Mania for J. K. Rowling's Bestselling Books*" by John Grange (Tyndale House Publications). John Granger argues that major religious themes in the books are:

- a) the books places young readers in a universe where there is a conflict between good and evil, and the books are firmly on the side of morality. However, as Christianity affirms being moral isn't easy as it may involve risk, danger and sacrifice. This same idea is evident in the Harry Potter books, e.g. "You have to face the choice between what is right and what is easy". Albus Dumbledore
- b) over the course of the story Harry Potter undergoes spiritual growth, or stages of transformation.
- c) the books explore the evils of prejudice as reflected in the "pure-blooded" wizards superior and hostile attitude towards "half-breeds" and "muggles"

- d) Harry Potter is involved in a struggle that involves having two natures. This mirrors the ideas of Christ the God-man in Christianity
- e) Harry Potter volunteers himself for sacrificial death which he faces as a human unaided by magic the outcome of which is a victory over evil and death – an analogy which mirrors the beliefs of many Christians about Christ’s death on the cross
- f) The books offer evidence of a world of things unseen
- g) Harry Potter’s attitude to life is not driven by greed, power, wealth or fame (e.g. he destroys the elder wand) counters the attitudes and materialism of our times

Also under discussion was Religion and Worldviews in the classroom – the ongoing discussion – see Agenda item 7

Two recently published academic articles were discussed. One of these articles was written by Emma Salter has the title, “*A critical reflection on the Commission on Religious Education’s proposed National Entitlement to Religion and Worldviews in England and Wales*”.

The other article, written by Lynn Revell and Kate Christopher, has the title, “*Worldviews and diversity: freedom of expression and teaching about the mosque.*”

Discussion about Emma Salter’s paper focussed on the concerns of primary teachers of RE. Salter argues that research indicates that a criticism primary teachers have regarding the “Religion and Worldview” approach to the subject is the belief that it would require them to teach about too many traditions and worldviews and this would lead to content overload, confusion and poor learning. Another related concern was about being expected to teach about “too much diversity too soon” resulting again in poor learning and pupils becoming confused. A third concern that primary teachers expressed was that they found it difficult to see a clear distinction between RE as they understood it and the proposed “Religion and Worldviews” approach.

Discussion about Lynn Revell and Kate Christopher’s article views focussed on the criticism they make about religious education. They claim that RE tends to minimise differences that exist within a religion and so presents an “*essentialised*” version of each religion. Religious education they claim fails to recognise diversity but instead promote “sameness” and that this is evident RE teaching resources. This may be demonstrated, it is claimed, by downloading resources from the TES website which are intended to help teachers explore “The mosque” as an RE topic.

Revell and Christopher claim resources available from this source are all very similar and tend to focus on key features like minarets, mihrabs, minbars, domed roofs and shoe racks, etc. This material, it is suggested, supports the view that RE tends to promote sameness as the resources the TES provides do not give any impression that there is any diversity within Islam with respect to what mosques look like, or that there is any diversity within Islam with respect to the practices, attitudes or beliefs of the Muslims that use a particular mosque. This criticism of RE was challenged at the meeting. The view was expressed that teaching pupils so that they learnt about typical features often found in mosques like minbars, mihrabs, minarets, etc. was appropriate but that this would only serve as an introduction to a topic about the mosque. If naming and labelling of parts was all that was taught this would be recognised by most teachers of RE as simply being RE that was poorly undertaken.

Revel and Christopher argue that the “Religion and Worldview” approach would acknowledge diversity in Islam.

In addition, Mary attended a local meeting of the NATRE group held as a combination of virtual and face to face meeting in Chadsmead Primary Lichfield in late Spring 2022 at 4.30.. Discussion centred around the AS – see AS section, and updates on resources.

ix). Update on RE Quality Mark application- St Chad’s Pattingham.

The school received the SACRE grant to enable them to apply for this quality mark. They are very grateful. The RE lead is working her way through the requirements collecting evidence for the assessment. Due to Covid-19 this could be a virtual assessment and not a face-to-face assessment. They are awaiting more information.

Mary Gale will visit the school to ensure they have a strong evidence base before the assessment. They have recently had an Ofsted inspection with a good outcome. The report states that the school has been working on a broad and balanced curriculum and especially made a reference to their work on diversity by using appropriate texts and reading books. The school was praised for highlighting Black History month in its curriculum. This bodes well for a future positive assessment of the REQM.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
29th June 2022
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
An Update on NASACRE

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of NASACRE issues. These are matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report.

4 Background

4.1 NASACRE is the national body of SACRE's. National meetings and conferences are held to which members of SACRE are invited and encouraged to attend. These have been held virtually due to Covid-19. Issues are discussed which have local or national importance for RE. The chair and the adviser attended a National conference on May 23rd 2022.

4.2 Members will be briefed on any key developments.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer: Mary Gale 07816374873

NASACRE CONFERENCE AND AGM MONDAY 23rd MAY 2022

About 150 delegates from SACREs across the country met for the NASACRE AGM and conference held online for the second time. The conference was opened by Linda Rudge, chair of NASACRE, welcoming delegates and celebrating the continued and varied work of SACREs and NASACRE over the last two years. She set the context for the title 'Ambitious SACREs', pointing out that ambition can be 'admirable or unrealistic'. SACREs need to aim for admirable, and SACREs are still standing, not standing still. The 'Still Standing' report is available to download from the NASACRE website.

The first two presentations and discussions focused on Religion and Worldviews as well as the substance of the curriculum. The third was an analysis of SACRE reports submitted to NASACRE and the DfE. There were three keynote speakers, and each was followed by time in breakout rooms discussing what had been heard.

The first keynote speaker was Ed Pawson, the Vice Chair of the REC. He shared the new vision for the Religious Education Council that 'Every young person experiences an academically rigorous and personally inspiring education in religion and worldviews.' The role of the REC is to campaign and advocate for good RE. It is a group with representatives from over 60 religious and non-religious groups. He also talked about the recent publication of a Draft Handbook on Religion and Worldviews, SACREs need to engage in the discussion about religion and worldviews.

Dr Richard Kueh (HMI) raised the challenge to SACREs about how they can support scholarly RE. He reiterated many of the key points raised in the Ofsted RE Research Review, published in May 2021. On the selection of content for a syllabus, he suggested that including a greater number of religions and non-religious worldviews did not guarantee a high quality of RE and that is an essential component of the discussion around syllabus design. Ambitious end goals, that reflect the scholarly nature of RE, are needed. A subject report on RE from Ofsted will be published this summer.

Just after lunch, the winners of this year's Westhill Awards were announced and Bristol, Leicester and Luton were successful. NASACRE and Westhill were disappointed by the low number of applicants and SACREs are urged to consider making a bid. If you need inspiration, remember that three of the June workshops will showcase last year's winners.

There is also a recording of how to apply for an award in the online training section of the NASACRE website.

Dr David Hampshire, former chair of NASACRE, presented his initial findings of the analysis of SACRE annual reports. The final report will be on the website and circulated to SACREs later this term. The key findings make for interesting reading, raising many questions that SACREs may wish to discuss. For example, resources made available to SACREs are very variable and the level of financial support had an impact on the effectiveness of SACREs. He focused on the fact that the primary function of a SACRE is to advise the Local Authority on RE and collective worship, and only a minority of SACREs reported that they had done that.

NASACRE is in discussion with the DfE about the findings of report and further advice and training will likely be forthcoming.

The business meeting was short and as no nominations had been received for vacancies on the Exec, other than the formal appointment of Saquat Ali as Treasurer and the reappointment of Sue Holmes as Secretary, the Chair expressed the need for need for more people with the right skills to be nominated by SACREs to work with the Executive committee to help with challenges raised by the White Paper.

After the business meeting, for which all the reports are available on the NASACRE website, Webmaster Matthew Tullett gave delegates an overview of the new website, which was launched at the conference. The new site should be easier to use, more streamlined, with a better search function and aimed to work better on mobile devices. SACREs using the new website are asked to contact NASACRE if they experience any difficulties.

During her closing remarks, NASACRE Chair, Linda Rudge, thanked retiring Executive members Alex Klein and Roy Galley for their work. It was also time to say farewell to our Treasurer, Michael Metcalf, after 29 years and welcome Saquat Ali to the role.

As they left, delegates posted comments in the Chat, such as: *Such a lot of supportive information and discussion. A day full of brilliant insight and interest.*

Many thanks to all the Exec for an excellent and informative conference. Making the absolute best out of having to make it all happen on ZOOM

Religious Education Agreed Syllabus conference June 29th 2022

Agenda

1. Present
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the February 2nd 2022 meeting- see minutes included in SACRE main minutes
4. Matters Arising
5. Update on milestones
6. Feedback from stakeholder meetings and survey
7. The changes to date- see draft copy.
8. Next steps
9. Date of next meeting

5. Update on Milestones

Convening of SACRE conferences to review and consider the recommendations for the new AS on the following dates

July 1st 2021- **completed.**

November 17th 2021- **completed**

February 2nd 2022- **completed**

June 29th 2022- today

Continuation of SACRE mini working group to support wording- **volunteers have put forward their names and some have attended virtual meetings in October 2021 (10th and 19th) and January 18th 2022.**

May 11th 2022 and June 9th 2022 face to face meeting

Discussions with stakeholders Summer 2021, Spring 2022 and Summer 2022.

Survey sent out to over 300 schools including academies and maintained and faith schools across the county.

See below for access to the survey

Future actions

AS conferences June 29th, 2022.

First presentation of the reviewed AS will take place in summer 2022.

Entrust support for illustrations late summer 2022

Final presentation autumn 2022 ready for confirmation

Launch event if deemed appropriate- twilight event autumn 2022.

Roll out to schools in the autumn term 2022, and then schools introduce changes January 2023 onwards.

Opportunity to take part as SACRE members

Stakeholders have been encouraged to click the following link and provide comments on the current syllabus. Comments to date have supported the review.

. Link to the survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KR5XDTH>

6. Stakeholder review of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education carried out by SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education)

Feedback from October 2021 (10th and 19th) and January 2022 (18th) meetings. Plus feedback from the surveys.

30 schools to date have provided feedback, this includes those who have taken part in the survey.

Feedback summary comments from stakeholders- not all of them understand the legal requirements of the AS.

Vision for RE in the AS needs to be clearer

The purpose of the AS needs to be clearer and in line with SCC vision and Ofsted Intent Implication and Impact- References to the Education Inspection Framework are needed-

Keep the three aims of Exploring Engaging and Reflecting but emphasise world views and religious and non-religious world views.

Please do not make radical changes

Section on British Values section and ensure 'respect' is highlighted

Inclusion of updated Early Years information required in line with new legislation- see sheets

More information on Special Educational Needs required- this could be included as an appendix.

Provide planning examples- this will go in the appendix as these will need updating

Provide more assessment examples- these will go in the appendix as these will need updating.

7. Changes to date

- The background information is now more succinct
- The icons associated with Engage, Explore, Reflect have been changed around, as the working party felt that the current icons in the draft version were more in keeping with the main three themes
- The order of the content has been rearranged

- The wording Engage, Explore, Reflect has been emphasised
- The vision and aims have been re-written
- There is now an emphasis on religion and world views
- The teaching and learning section now includes references to world views
- What has to be taught at each key stage has been tweaked
- The assessment section has been tweaked to include non-religious aspects
- The Early Foundation Stage (EYFS) section has been rewritten to reflect the new statutory requirements of all teaching in the EYFS.
- The Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) section has been rewritten to reflect the new statutory requirements of assessment for SEND and to offer more support to special schools.
- British Values section is now clearer
- Ofsted section is included
- Legal duties are clearer
- Updated membership

Next steps

Chair to write his Foreword and Councillor to write the Introduction.

Need approval from this meeting to complete a final draft that the business unit can work on to ensure formatting is correct.

Send to relevant SCC committees when this is available.

Date of next meeting

November 16th 2022.



The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS
2023-2028

Contents Page

Introduction

XXXXXXXXX Staffordshire County Council Lead Member
for Learning and Skills





Foreword

Rev. Prebendary Michael Metcalf - Chair, Staffordshire SACRE
and Agreed Syllabus Conference



Explore Engage Reflect

Background Information

RE is multifaith and recognises the place of Christianity and the other principal religions in the UK. Non-religious worldviews are included.

The RE curriculum drawn up by a SACRE or used by an academy or free school, 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' [Section 375 Education Act 1996]

Religious Education in schools **must** be taught in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. That syllabus is determined locally through the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

This revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) for Staffordshire has been developed by the SACRE, supported by Religious Education professionals.

This syllabus sets out the statutory requirements for RE in Staffordshire.

The Staffordshire locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus of RE prepared under Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the LA under that schedule.

The statutory requirements relating to Religious Education in schools are set out in the Education Act 1996 and in the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. These are summarised in the briefing paper Religious Education in Schools (England) published by the House of Commons Library in October 2019.

The Acts referred to here are supplemented by guidance within the document Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory Guidance 2010, which was published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

The legislation states that all state-funded schools must teach Religious Education and that maintained schools without a religious character must follow the syllabus agreed by the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC), the body that each Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE) is legally required to establish in order to ratify and publish the locally agreed Religious Education syllabus.

RE is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and it **must** be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over).

This requirement does not apply for children below compulsory school age (although there are many examples of good practice of RE in nursery classes).

Special schools should ensure that every pupil receives RE 'as far as is practicable'.

This revised syllabus supersedes all previous versions and is issued for implementation in all applicable Staffordshire schools from January 2023.

(See 'Ensuring Your School is Compliant' [Page 38](#))

This revised syllabus seeks to build on the previous syllabus from 2016.

Although there is no National Curriculum for RE as such, all maintained schools, including faith schools must follow the National Curriculum requirements to teach a broad and balanced

curriculum, which includes RE.

All schools therefore have a **statutory** duty to teach RE.

Academies and free schools are contractually required through the terms of their funding agreement to make provision for the teaching of RE.

Research of the following documents has supported the writing of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus

- *National Curriculum Programmes of Study 2013*
- *2018 final report of the Commission on Religious Education Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward- A National Plan for RE*
- *Ofsted May 2021 research paper on Religious Education*
- *Policy Paper on Inclusive Britain May 2022*
- *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook including Development Matters 2021*
- *The Draft Handbook Religion and Worldviews in the classroom 2022*

When writing the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus, the advisory syllabus conference took note of the information provided in the document -*REC Draft Handbook Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom 2022*.

This draft document clarifies the general and legal entitlement.

Staffordshire SACRE is confident that this revised syllabus provides firm foundations for the teaching of high quality RE including worldviews, enabling all pupils to explore religion(s) and worldviews (religious and non-religious) by exploring, engaging and reflecting on the sources of their own developing worldviews within the rich and complex heritage of humanity.

Vision and Aims Vision Statement

The vision for Religious Education (RE) in Staffordshire's Agreed Syllabus 2023 is as follows:-

The role of RE in schools is to help prepare and equip all pupils for life and citizenship in today's diverse and plural Britain, through fostering in each pupil an increasing awareness of, and sensitivity within, the diversity of religious and non-religious beliefs, practices, spiritual insights and ****world views** they will encounter.

By EXPLORING, ENGAGING and REFLECTING pupils will develop the knowledge, insights and skills necessary for them to be able to live authentically and responsibly as adults in today's world, acknowledging how religious and secular communities seek to uphold and develop the well-being of the human family.

Rationale

We live in an increasingly diverse society, religiously and culturally. Religious Education plays a special role in preparing pupils to flourish in this complex world. Educating pupils to live well in a culturally and religiously plural society means that they must learn how to navigate difference and diversity.

This will often mean reflecting on views and behaviours that they have previously not encountered, and which may not correspond neatly with their own views and understandings of the world.

Religious Education therefore not only enables pupils to build up a core basis of relevant knowledge and insights and supports them as they explore the "big questions" about life and formulate and express their own views and values.

It also challenges pupils to recognise and confront negative attitudes towards diversity, both in society at large and within themselves.

****Note on world views**

A "world view" is the framework of beliefs and values which shape the way a person experiences and responds to the world. Everyone has a world view, though this may not be acknowledged and articulated in a fully conscious form. When a group of people consciously share the same world view, they often express this in organised and tangible ways, and commit to it as part of their individual identities. Such a shared world view may be religious in character, or non-religious. Religious Education brings pupils into contact with a range of such world views, encouraging each pupil to develop and forge their own personal sense of values, identity and world view, both in the context of the pupil's cultural heritage and also more widely in relation to the diversity of world views found within society as a whole.

The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus seeks to achieve this vision through the following specific themes



EXPLORE



ENGAGE



REFLECT

The intended outcomes of RE within the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus are that pupils should acquire, through the three themes:

EXPLORE



1) *Acquire an increasing core of insightful knowledge concerning religions and beliefs, both in Britain and in more global terms.*

By exploring religious beliefs, teachings, and practices – so acquiring knowledge and understanding of religious stories, sacred texts, lifestyles, rituals, and symbolism that offer an insight into religious and secular experiences.

ENGAGE



2) *Acquire a developing capacity to engage with ultimate questions alongside the consideration of the responses from religious and non-religious groups and worldviews and to formulate their own sense of identity and values;*

By engaging with fundamental questions – so appreciating the human and religious questions that are raised by life and its experiences, and through which meaning, significance and value are forged, and by expressing and evaluating their personal responses to such questions- so gaining skills to be able to relate the things studied and discussed, to their own experience.

REFLECT



3) *A growing range of the social, spiritual, and emotional skills and dispositions appropriate to living well in a religiously plural and open society.*

By reflecting – on the reality of religious diversity and on the issues raised by living in a diverse world - so developing skills of analysis and discernment in relation to prejudice, discrimination, and bias, together with skills of self-awareness, moral judgement and responsible choice.

These outcomes underpin the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus.



Explore Engage Reflect

The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus

What should be taught and when?

Each key stage should involve an in-depth study of the narrative, beliefs and practices at the heart of Christianity. Alongside Christianity, Islam should feature throughout a school's RE curriculum.

In selecting their in-depth study schools should take account of other principal/major faiths found in the United Kingdom. Schools may draw on examples from other major faiths where examples of belief and practice better illustrate the dimension being explored.

These include:-

Judaism, Sikhism (Sikhi), Hinduism and Buddhism.

In choosing their in-depth study/ focus faiths, schools should take account of the religious profile of the school and the local community as well as national and international factors.

Pupils should also be introduced to the presence of non-religious (secular) world views and the lifestyles these support as children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all classrooms.

These worldviews, including for example Humanism can form part of the field of study.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils should have the opportunity to develop a growing sense of awareness of self and their own community. They should encounter the diversity of faiths and world views represented in their own community and in Great Britain. Giving young children familiarity with the presence of major faiths, world views and a wide religious vocabulary raises awareness of the diverse nature of the world around them and provides a structure in which to develop their learning.

Schools should build upon this foundation in subsequent key stages.

Key Stage 1

At key stage one, schools should focus their study on Christianity and one other faith. Islam is the suggested other faith. The choice will be determined by the local context.

Key Stage 2

At key stage two, schools should focus on Christianity and two other faiths taking note also of non-religious world views. It is suggested that Islam is studied as one of the other faith. This choice again will be determined by the local context.

Key Stage 3 and beyond

At key stage three and beyond, schools should focus on Christianity and three other faiths and take note of non-religious world views. The choice again will be determined by the local context, but schools should seek to ensure that pupils have achieved a breadth of knowledge. Those pupils who undertake an examination course, their breadth of study will be in line with examination board.

All key stages will utilise the three specific themes to support teaching and learning

The Three Specific Themes are:-



EXPLORE



ENGAGE



REFLECT

Teaching and Learning

Key Dimensions

The development of learners who are equipped for life and citizenship in *today's diverse and plural Britain* has to take place in a context, using dimensions and content to explore the three curriculum themes of :-

 Explore

 Engage

 Reflect

An exploration of key dimensions will give pupils the building blocks with which to construct their understanding of belief systems and world views and the context in which to develop such aspects.

The three curriculum themes are supported by six broad dimensions:

1. Beliefs, teachings and sources
2. Practices and ways of life
3. Expressing meaning
4. Identity, diversity and belonging
5. Meaning, purpose and truth
6. Values and commitments

The programmes of study that follow identify a number of curriculum opportunities in relation to each of these broad dimensions to give structure to the planning process. Each statement should be approached in the context of the syllabus themes of :-

Explore

Engage

Reflect

Pupils are entitled to experience these curriculum opportunities and they should be the **starting point** for planning across a key stage. They do not significantly prescribe content, this is a matter for schools to decide for themselves, however they provide the basis for formulating challenging and stimulating questions which support enquiry and engage pupils in the studies through the three themes.

The curriculum opportunities in the themes and the programmes of study ([see page 17](#)) focus on religious experience and world views. To support good learning and skill development through the curriculum opportunities pupils should also, as appropriate:

- encounter people from different religious, non-religious and philosophical groups who can express a range of convictions on religion, world views and moral issues

- visit places of religious significance
- use ICT to enhance understanding
- discuss, question, and evaluate important issues in religion. world views and philosophy including ultimate questions and ethical issues
- feel confident when taking part in debates about moral issues
- prepare pupils for the fact that there will always be disagreement on matters of morality and their right of expression is balanced by a responsibility to listen to the views of others
- encourage pupils to disagree with dignity and respect the right of individuals and groups to hold different perspectives to their own
- reflect upon and carefully evaluate their own and others' beliefs and values using reasoned and balanced arguments
- use a range of forms of expression to communicate their arguments
- explore the connection between RE and other curriculum areas



Explore Engage Reflect

Planning your Religious Education

Religious Education encompasses depth of understanding rather than breadth of areas covered. It is a complex and dynamic subject. For this reason, it must engage with important concepts rather than amass a vast list of facts.

Good planning in Religious Education will adopt approaches that aspire towards high standards, through inspirational, motivational and challenging activities. When the subject is highly valued, adequately resourced, led in a passionate way and taught with commitment and thoughtfulness, pupils will be encouraged to think deeply about the questions that confront them in studying RE, extend their learning and understanding about a variety of religion and belief perspectives, and have the opportunity to reflect on their own sense of identity with respect to religion and belief in a meaningful way.

In order to achieve these outcomes units of work should be planned to develop the three curriculum themes and to allow for regular review of pupils' progress.

This would normally, but not exclusively, mean that pupils should be guided through the curriculum themes as follows:

- Exploring the issue or dimension, encountering the context, following up questions and establishing new knowledge concerning religion, belief and world views. **(Explore)**
- Investigating the impact of beliefs and practices on lifestyles, attitudes and action and considering the ways in which beliefs, spiritual insights and ideas are expressed, engaging with fundamental questions to understand why people respond to life as they do **(Engage)**
- Reflecting on equality and diversity, and on personal responses to these aspects to develop their own standpoints and self-understanding **(Reflect)**

Teachers should exemplify the above in every unit of work. The three themes will therefore be revisited in every RE experience, giving pupils the opportunity to practise and make progress on a regular basis.

Inclusion SEND provision and the Agreed Syllabus

A wide range of pupils have special educational needs, some of whom also have disabilities. A proportion of these pupils will be taught in special schools. Units of work should be planned to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving. In many cases, such planning will mean that these pupils will be able to study fully the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

What opportunities are provided for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in RE?

The Staffordshire SACRE vision is that every pupil can achieve and benefit from good quality RE, including all pupils with SEND. RE is a statutory part of the core curriculum for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are found in all contexts and all teachers are teachers of SEND pupils. Good quality teaching in RE will tailor the planning of the syllabus carefully to the special needs of all pupils. The law says that the Agreed Syllabus is to be taught to SEND pupils 'as far as it is practicable.' RE provision for different groups of pupils will vary but all pupils are included.

The achievements and learning of pupils with special educational needs can be measured and credited using the (older) Performance Descriptions for RE ('P' Scales), or the (newer) materials based upon the DfE's Engagement Model. These can both provide teachers with indicators of progress for pupils with SEND within RE. Teachers who work with children working within the parameters of the 'Engagement Model' will find some published guidance (e.g. Routes for Learning or Quest for Learning or EQUALS units) to support them to implement the syllabus practically and record the progress a pupil has made through the earliest stages of development. For pupils who may need modified provision, material may be selected from earlier or later key stages, where this is necessary, to enable individual pupils to progress and achieve. Such material should be presented in contexts suitable to the pupil's age. In making decisions about adjusting the content of the key stage, teachers should take into account the previous experience of the pupil as well as the necessity to communicate a specific differentiated approach to entitlement to subsequent teachers.

Specific advice

Pupils with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD)

Quality RE begins with the unique experience of each pupil. A calm and peaceful space can enable pupils to experience and enjoy a sense of spirituality as an individual. RE for CLDD pupils involves developing a sense of themselves, their emotions, senses and feelings.

Pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD)

Quality RE begins with the unique experience of each pupil. RE for SLD pupils involves developing a sense of themselves, their emotions, senses and feelings. Multi-sensory approaches can aid the enjoyment of spiritual experiences. The use of story, music and shared outdoor experiences will enhance such experiences. RE can also support the development of relationships and the understanding of the needs of other peoples' needs.

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD)

RE for MLD pupils can provide an insight into the world of religions and human experience. Pupils can develop a sense of themselves, their emotions, senses and feelings. Multi-sensory approaches can aid the enjoyment of spiritual experiences. This can support pupils in making links with their own lives in their own family and local community, which should include local religious communities.

Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD)

RE for EBD pupils can enable them to address deep issues of concern in the world of religions and human experience. Pupils can develop a sense of themselves, their emotions, senses and feelings, many which can be complex in nature. The school can provide a safe space to aid this development. Multi-sensory approaches can be utilised to deepen these feelings. RE can also assist the development of pupils' maturity. This can support pupils in making links with their own lives in their own family and local community, which should include local religious communities.

The 2021 Government standards for assessing pupils working towards the standards of KS1 can be found at: the DfE website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-key-stage-1-standards>.

The 2021 engagement model for pupils with SEND is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model>





Explore Engage Reflect



Programmes of study

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Key Stage 1
- Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 3
- Key Stage 4
- Post 16





Explore Engage Reflect

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Pupils should be taught an increasingly rich knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews. They should learn to express and communicate ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews. They should gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews

Children in Nursery classes /other early years' settings are not subject to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, but they are required to cover the religious and spiritual aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through the learning intentions.

These learning intentions for RE are developed from the relevant areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (DfE, 2020), supported by the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which define the level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS. These are exemplified in the Prime areas.

Prime area: Communication and Language: RE enables pupils to:

- Listen attentively and respond with questions comments and actions to a wide range of stories from different religions and worldviews.
- Hold conversation and make comments about the religious materials, artefacts, songs, stories and celebrations they encounter.
- Participate in discussions offering their own ideas about religion and belief using recently introduced religious vocabulary.
- Offer explanations and answers to 'why' questions about religious stories, non-fiction, rhymes, songs and poems.

Prime area: Personal, Social & Emotional Development. RE enables pupils to:

- Understand their own feelings and those of others, stimulated by religious materials and ideas.
- Give focused attention to religious materials such as worship, story, festival, song, community living.
- Confidently talk about simple values, right and wrong and good or bad behaviour.
- Co-operate and take turns with others, showing sensitivity to their own and others' needs and feelings.

Specific areas through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific area: Literacy. RE enables pupils to:

- Demonstrate understanding of religious stories and narratives using recently introduced vocabulary to retell stories.
- Enjoy and learn from discussion and role play about religious stories, non-fiction, rhymes, poems and songs.
- Use RE examples to write simple phrases or sentences that can be read by others.

Specific area: Mathematics. RE enables pupils to:

- Recognise, create and describe some patterns, sorting and ordering objects simply.

Specific area: Understanding the World. RE enables pupils to:

- Talk about the lives of people around them, understanding characters and events from stories.

- Describe their immediate environment – e.g. on a visit to a place of worship.
- Know some similarities and differences between **different religious and cultural communities** in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Explore the natural world around them making observations of animals and plants, environments and seasons, making space for responses of wonder, awe and questioning.

Specific area: Expressive Arts and Design. RE enables pupils to:

- Create work drawing from religions and beliefs with a variety of materials and tools, sharing their creations and explaining the meaning of their work.
- Adapt and recount religious stories inventively, imaginatively and expressively.
- Sing, perform and learn from well-known songs in RE imaginatively and expressively.
- Develop their imagination and expression using RE content in relation to art, music, dance, imaginative play, and role play and stories to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- Respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste.

Key Stage One (KSI)

Dimension	Curriculum Opportunities Pupils should have the opportunity to:		
Beliefs teachings and sources	Engage with stories and extracts from religious literature and talk about their meanings - 1.1a	Explore stories about the lives and teachings of key religious figures - 1.1b	Find out about ways in which sacred texts are regarded, read and handled by believers - 1.1c
Practices and ways of life	Find out about how and when people worship and ask questions about why this is important to believers - 1.2a	Explore the preparations for and find out about the celebration of festivals 1.2b	Identify the importance for some people of belonging to a religion and recognise the difference this makes to their lives - 1.2c
Expressing meaning	Explore as appropriate the special nature of artefacts used in worship - 1.3a	Identify symbolic actions, gestures and rituals and talk about how they are used as part of worship and ceremonies - 1.3b	Engage with religious beliefs and ideas expressed through story, symbol and other visual forms of expression - 1.3c
Identity diversity and belonging	Reflect and respond to stories about belonging and relating to religious communities and non-religious ways of life- 1.4a	Identify and ask questions about customs associated with particular religious and non-religious ways of life - 1.4b	Find out about ceremonies in which special moments in the life cycle are marked - 1.4c
Meaning purpose and truth	Ask and respond to questions about things that are interesting or puzzling in the world - 1.5a	Listen to and ask questions about stories of individuals and their relationship with God - 1.5b	Explore a range of stories and extracts from sacred writings and talk about meaning they have for believers - 1.5c
Values and commitments	Reflect and respond to stories highlighting the morals and values in practice - 1.6a	Reflect on examples of care and concern shown by believers in religious communities and non-religious ways of life and explore reasons for these actions - 1.6b	Explore stories from religious traditions and find out about attitudes to the natural world - 1.6c

Key Stage Two (KS2)

Dimension	Curriculum Opportunities Pupils should have the opportunity to:			
Beliefs teachings and sources	Explore the origins of sacred writings and consider their importance for believers today - 2.1a	Explore a variety of forms of literature found in sacred books and investigate a range of religious teachings - 2.1b	Explore the life of key religious figures and make links with teachings and practices of special significance to followers - 2.1c	Explore the meaning of a wide range of stories about the beginnings of the world and reflect upon their importance for believers - 2.1d
Practices and ways of life	Compare and contrast the practice of religion in the home in different religious communities - 2.2a	Identify the main features and patterns of an act of worship and talk about the importance of worship for believers - 2.2b	Investigate some features of key religious festivals and celebrations and identify similarities and differences - 2.2c	Investigate the life of a person who has been inspired by their faith and make links between belief and action - 2.2d
Expressing meaning	Explore the symbolic use of a wide range of objects, sounds, visual images, actions and gestures and make suggestions as to the intended meaning they might have for believers - 2.3a	Explore the meaning of stories drawn from religious sources and reflect on the significance of key words, phrases or expressions - 2.3b	Compare and contrast the use of symbols, actions and gestures used in worship by different communities - 2.3c	Identify some of the ways in which religions name and describe attributes of God and make links with belief and practice - 2.3d
Identity diversity and belonging	Explore the diversity of a range of religious traditions and world views and identify and reflect on similarities and differences - 2.4a	Find out about the activities of a local religious community and make links with key religious teachings - 2.4b	Research some key events in the development of a religious tradition and explain the impact on believers today - 2.4c	Investigate the importance for believers of ceremonies in which special moments in the life cycle are marked - 2.4d
Meaning purpose and truth	Raise questions about issues which cause people to wonder and investigate some answers to be found in religious writings and teachings - 2.5a	Investigate and reflect on a range of religious and world view responses to suffering, hardship and death - 2.5b	Investigate stories about God's relationship with people and suggest how, for some people, this helps them to make sense of life - 2.5c	Make links between beliefs and action and reflect on how this might have local, national and international impact - 2.5d
Values and commitments	Explore rules for living found in sacred writings and teachings and ask questions about their impact on the lives of believers - 2.6a	Investigate ceremonies associated with joining or belonging to a faith community and talk about the meaning of commitment - 2.6b	Engage with a variety of people about their beliefs and values and ask questions about the way commitment affects their lives - 2.6c	Explore religious stories and teachings about the environment and identify and reflect on their impact on behaviour - 2.6d

Key Stage Three (KS3)

Dimension	Curriculum Opportunities Pupils should have the opportunity to:		
Beliefs teachings and sources	Explore different possible interpretations for a range of sacred writings and religious teachings and reflect on their impact on individuals and communities - 3.1a	Evaluate the contribution made to communities and societies by different religious leaders - 3.1b	Apply the teachings of key religious figures to contemporary moral and ethical issues - 3.1c
Practices and ways of life	Analyse and reflect on the significance of shared activities for individuals both believers and non-believers, religious communities and those of no faith.- 3.2a	Explore celebrations and commemorations which can both unite and divide and reflect on the reasons for this - 3.2b	Evaluate the impact of beliefs on behaviour and explore the consequences for individuals and communities- 3.2c
Expressing meaning	Compare and contrast the use of symbolism in worship and analyse its effectiveness for believers - 3.3a	Investigate the symbolism of celebration and commemoration and evaluate its effectiveness in expressing what is important to religious communities - 3.3b	Identify a range of key sources for religious communities and make connections between interpretation and action - 3.3c
Identity diversity and belonging	Explore why people belong or do not belong to religions and analyse the impact this has on individuals and communities - 3.4a	Compare and contrast key religious practices and reflect on why there is diversity within and between faiths - 3.4b	Explore the impact of diversity, both religious and secular on communities and how some apply religious teaching to issues of tolerance and harmony - 3.4c
Meaning purpose and truth	Demonstrate how believers use religious sources to provide answers when engaging with questions of meaning, purpose and truth - 3.5a	Analyse and compare the evidence and arguments used when engaging with questions about the nature and existence of God - 3.5b	Evaluate the relationship between science and religion - 3.5c
Values and commitments	Investigate the responsibility and explain the challenge of carrying on a religious tradition - 3.6a	Make clear connections between religious beliefs, teachings and actions - 3.6b	Apply a range of beliefs and values to current issues and questions and analyse the impact on choices and behaviour - 3.6c

Key Stage Four (KS4)

At key stage 4, students are expected to research beliefs, practices, issues and ideas associated with religions and worldviews and be able to demonstrate an understanding of how these impact on the lives of individuals, groups, communities and within wider society. They should also be attentive to the place of religions and belief within public life in our country and across the world. These insights will be derived from engagement with religion and belief through theological, ethical, philosophical, and sociological perspectives.

In keeping with the three themes and the underlying principles of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus all key stage 4 pupils **must** have the opportunity to study Christianity and to draw examples from at least three other faiths or secular world view.

The decision to enter pupils for an examination at the end of the course is at the schools' discretion.

At key stage 4 pupils may fulfil their entitlement by following as a basis an accredited specification (from a recognised examination board) in Religious Studies. Schools should provide reasonable time for pupils to complete this and if appropriate, to attain an external qualification.

This may be Full Course, or Entry Level Religious Studies.

Schools wishing to base this provision on any other specification, for example Humanities or Citizenship, must take advice from SACRE.

Please note

Where schools do not provide an accredited course they **must make** alternative provision to teach RE

Post 16 Key Stage Five (KS5)

A programme of study is included here for students who are not pursuing an examination course in religious education/studies. Schools are encouraged to use a variety of approaches to ensuring the statutory requirements are met at key stage 5. RE **must be taught** at key stage 5.

Dimension	Curriculum Opportunities Pupils should have the opportunity to:	
Beliefs teachings and sources	Critically evaluate the influence and authority of sacred literature for believers today - 5.1a	Explain the impact of belief on the achievements of significant religious figures and evaluate their influence on historical and contemporary issues - 5.1b
Practices and ways of life	Explore and reflect on the way in which belief and practice support and sustain individuals and communities using contemporary examples - 5.2a	Present evidence for differing interpretations of religious sources and analyse and reflect the impact on individual conscience and social change - 5.2b
Expressing meaning	Explore and interpret the significance and function of a variety of forms of religious, spiritual, secular and moral expression - 5.3a	Present a detailed analysis of key religious and non-religious sources and evaluate a range of interpretations - 5.3b
Identity diversity and belonging	Reflect critically on the advantages and disadvantages of inheriting a religious tradition and reflect on the changing impact of religion and beliefs on community and society over time - 5.4a	Reflect critically on the variety of practice within and between faith groups and reflect on issues which unite and divide religious traditions - 5.4b
Meaning purpose and truth	Engage with and analyse responses to philosophical and paradoxical questions from a range of perspectives - 5.5a	Investigate and interpret a variety of religious, non-religious and spiritual experience and reflect on differing responses and impact - 5.5b
Values and commitments	Explore ways in which communities help their members respond positively to life's dilemmas - 5.6a	Raise questions about contemporary personal, moral and social issues and analyse the variety of religious and non-religious responses - 5.6b

A Framework for Assessment

Assessing achievement in Religious Education (RE)

Pupils have an entitlement to RE throughout their school life. This entitlement should include the opportunities, experiences and challenges which engage young people in the learning process.

As part of that learning process, pupils should have clear goals to aim for. They should also be supported on their learning journey by a **framework** which indicates progress.

Here, the framework takes the form of age-related expectations.

The framework supports and promotes the development of the three syllabus themes

The framework provides a statement of age-related expectations for each year group. It should be used by teachers as a tool to determine the extent to which pupils have met the expectations.

Pupils are assessed as:

- **Working at greater depth within the expected standard (GDS):** pupils who are exceeding the expectations for their age group
- **Working at the expected standard (EXS):** pupils who are meeting the expectations for their age group in full
- **Working towards the expected standard (WTS):** pupils who have yet to meet the expectations for their age group

Teachers will be expected to comply with current legislation with regard to the reporting of progress and attainment in religious education.

SEND assessment

The achievements and learning of pupils with special educational needs can be measured and credited using the (older) Performance Descriptions for RE ('P' Scales), or the (newer) materials based upon the DfE's Engagement Model. These can both provide teachers with indicators of progress for pupils with SEND within RE. Teachers who work with children working within the parameters of the 'Engagement Model' will find some published guidance (e.g. Routes for Learning or Quest for Learning or EQUALS units) to support them to implement the syllabus practically and record the progress a pupil has made through the earliest stages of development.

The Religious Education Framework

Age related expectations for RE

The age-related expectations can be used as a whole to provide an overview of reasonable expectations of achievement across the three themes of religious education for each year group.

Assessment

GDS

EXS

WTS

For each statement a pupil can be assessed as

working at greater depth within the expected standard (GDS),

working at the expected standard (EXS) or

working towards the expected standard (WTS):

By the end of Reception/EYFS

Explore



Pupils talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They talk about similarities and differences in relation to themselves, places, objects, materials and living things including faith buildings e.g. the church.

Engage



Pupils can talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another and what makes them special and unique.

Reflect



Pupils can talk about how other children do not always enjoy the same things and are sensitive to this. They can talk about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities, and traditions. They can show how important it is to be part of a community

By the end of Year 1

Explore



Pupils use words and phrases to recognise and name features of religious life and practice valued by believers. They can recall religious stories and recognise symbols and other verbal and visual forms of religious expression which have meaning for believers.

Engage



Pupils can talk about the experiences of the world around them, stating what is of value and concern to themselves and others. They use stories to identify ways in which people are special and unique.

Reflect



Pupils can demonstrate awareness that there are many religious traditions/faith communities and that some people do not follow a recognised faith or believe system or identify as being religious.

By the end of Year 2

Explore



Pupils use words and phrases to identify some features of religious life and practices valued by believers. Pupils retell religious stories and suggest meanings for religious actions and symbols. They identify how religion is expressed in different ways.

Engage



Pupils can recognise that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer. They are able to share ideas about right and wrong.

Reflect



Pupils are able to name more than one religious tradition or faith community and can talk about some of the distinctive features of each religious tradition/faith community. They know that some people do not identify as being religious.

By the end of Year 3

Explore



Pupils use a developing vocabulary to describe some key features of religions, recognising similarities and differences. They make links between beliefs, practices 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.

Engage



Pupils ask important questions about values, commitments, and beliefs, making links between their own and others' responses, attitudes and behaviour.

Reflect



Pupils can identify and distinguish between the faiths and world views being explored and can express some awareness of their identity within or outside these faiths. They understand the importance and reality of existing in a plural context. They know that some people do not identify as being religious.

By the end of Year 4

Explore



Pupils use a developing vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, practices, beliefs, ideas, 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 explore and explain meanings for a range of forms of religious expression.

Engage



Pupils raise, and suggest answers to, fundamental questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values, and commitments, recognising the implications and consequences of making moral choices.

Reflect



They apply their ideas about identity and commitment in a diverse world to their own and other people's lives. They describe what inspires and influences themselves and others, especially their commitments, values, and choices. They can recognise in themselves and others some reactions to living alongside others who have a different faith or stance. They can explain why some people do not identify as being religious.

By the end of Year 5

Explore



Pupils use an increasingly wide vocabulary to explain the impact of religious beliefs and a non-religious life stance on individuals and communities. They show a developing insight into why people belong to religions. They demonstrate 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 ethical issues. They

Engage



Pupils ask, and suggest answers to, fundamental questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments, relating them to their own and others' lives and making clear connections between personal viewpoints and action.

Reflect



Pupils explain what inspires and influences them, expressing their own and others' views on the opportunities and challenges of commitment in a diverse world. They identify the consequences for themselves and for others of holding particular beliefs and values.

By the end of Year 6

Explore



Pupils use an increasingly rich vocabulary to give informed accounts of religions and beliefs. They interpret sources and arguments, explaining the reasons that are used in different ways by different traditions to provide answers for ethical issues. They interpret the significance of different forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression. They interpret sources and arguments regarding world views/issues.

Engage



Pupils use reasoning and examples to explore the relationship between beliefs, teachings and world issues. They express insights into their own and others' views on fundamental questions of identity and belonging, meaning purpose and perceived truth.

Reflect



Focussing on values and commitments pupils consider their own response to the opportunities and challenges of living in a diverse world whilst taking into account the views and experiences of others. They are able to talk about examples of religious cooperation and why this is sometimes difficult.

By the end of Key Stage 3

Explore



Pupils use a comprehensive vocabulary to show a coherent understanding of a range of religions and beliefs by analysing issues in a faith context. They account for the influence of history and culture on aspects of religious life and practice. 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.

Engage



Pupils identify, and articulate critical responses to, fundamental questions of meaning, purpose and truth and ethical issues. They can express a clear sense of their own identity.

Reflect



Pupils evaluate the significance of religious and world views for understanding questions of human relationships, belonging, identity, society, values, and commitments appropriate to living well in a diverse world. They identify interfaith opportunities and successes as well as instances of religious prejudice and of discrimination on religious grounds using evidence and examples and in the context of their own experience. They are able to articulate awareness of negative attitudes within themselves and others.

By the end of Key Stage 4

Explore



Pupils use sophisticated vocabulary to analyse a range of religions and beliefs. They contextualise expressions 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.

Engage



Pupils coherently analyse a wide range of viewpoints on fundamental questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values, and commitments. They can give an account of and justification for their personal standpoints

Reflect



Pupils synthesise a range of evidence, arguments, reflections, and examples on the challenges raised by living in a diverse world. They can discuss coherently strategies for living well in a religiously plural and open society, developing skills for countering prejudice, discrimination, and bias, fully justifying their own views and ideas and providing a detailed insight of the perspectives of others.

By the end of Post 16

Explore



Pupils use a complex and sophisticated vocabulary to provide a consistent and detailed analysis of religions and beliefs. 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 and ethics are studied. They synthesise effectively their accounts of the varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

Engage



Pupils analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments relating this both to themselves and others.

Reflect



Pupils evaluate in depth the significance of religious diversity in a pluralistic society. They give independent, well informed, and highly reasoned insights into their own and others' perspectives on religious and spiritual issues raised by living in a diverse world, providing well-substantiated and balanced conclusions

Religious Education (RE) and British Values

The Government first set out its definition of British values in 2011 as part of its Prevent Strategy, which was introduced as part of a series of initiatives designed to combat violent extremism.

Since 2014, Ofsted has been charged with the responsibility of scrutinising the place of British values and making a judgement about the effectiveness of schools in promoting them as part of the inspection process.

British values include the following strands:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Effective teaching and learning in RE will provide a range of opportunities for pupils to engage with and think about British values. This is because the subject addresses universal human values and considers the place of moral and ethical concerns within religions and worldviews, which underline the importance of human dignity, fairness, trust, respect, justice and freedom.

RE will promote the different strands of the British values agenda. It is important to add that RE is only one of many subjects within the school curriculum that will contribute to the promotion of British values. Every school has an overarching responsibility to ensure that each of the statutory values are understood and upheld by the pupils in their care and this requirement will be addressed through a variety of strategies and subject policies.

Democracy

In the study of RE, it is important that a range of views, perspectives and attitudes can be heard and that all pupils have the opportunity to contribute to debates and discussions.

Teachers who ensure that this objective is fulfilled will be modelling democratic behaviour and, in so doing, reinforcing this particular British value.

The rule of law

RE will involve pupils in learning about and understanding the principles behind a range of codes for human living, which are associated with different faith and belief positions. They will be able to differentiate between state and religious laws and grasp the importance of fairness, justice, equality and order.

Individual liberty

Through their study of a range of religions and non-religious worldviews, pupils will examine important questions relating to human identity as this is shaped by both socio-cultural settings and personal decisions. The value of individual liberty will be highlighted by considering issues such as human freedom, autonomy and desire, along with the place of both faith and reason.

Mutual respect

A vital outcome of pupils' study of RE should be a sense of respect for those who hold a wide range of faith and belief positions. This stance will not preclude the possibility of disagreement. However, pupils will be encouraged to disagree with dignity and respect the right of individuals and groups to hold different perspectives to their own.

Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

The expression of intolerant attitudes has no place in the RE classroom, although attitudes and behaviours that cause harm to others will be considered.

Teachers should aspire to go beyond promoting tolerance of different religions and worldviews by underlining the need to celebrate diversity and encouraging attitudes of respect and trust to develop.

All state-funded primary and secondary schools will be subject to Section 5 inspections, which will be carried out by Ofsted inspectors.

Ofsted will also inspect schools of religious character.

They may inspect Religious Education but will not inspect collective worship in these schools.

Schools with a religious character will be subject to an additional inspection process. In schools within this category, denominational education and collective worship are inspected by a body appointed by the maintained school's governing board under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 or as provided in the academy's funding agreement. The inspection framework or body responsible for different kinds of schools with religious character are as follows:

- Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) for Church of England and Methodist schools.
- Diocesan or Archdiocesan inspections for Catholic schools.
- The Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) for Islamic schools.
- Pikuach – the education arm of the Board of Deputies of British Jews – for Jewish schools.
- The Hindu Education Authority for Hindu schools.
- The Network of Sikh Organisations for Sikh schools.

Further information about the inspection arrangements for schools with a religious character is provided within the briefing paper, Faith Schools in England: FAQs, published by the House of Commons Library in June 2018.

The Ofsted Framework

Ofsted published a new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and associated School Inspection Handbooks, which were implemented in school inspections from September 2019 onwards.

These documents signalled a significant shift in the approach in the inspection of schools. This now involves a greater focus on the wider curriculum subjects, including Religious Education.

Based on data collected by the National Association for Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) in Autumn 2019, the impact of the new inspection framework is already being experienced by schools, with the inspectors taking an increasing interest in what Ofsted are calling 'the quality of education' in Religious Education.

This involves assessment of the leadership, curriculum, planning, teaching, learning, assessment and resourcing of Religious Education. In addition to inspecting the individual curriculum subjects, Ofsted will also consider, and make a judgement about, the extent to which each school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of its pupils. Under the new Education Inspection Framework, key judgements will be made about four aspects of the work of each school:

- Quality of education
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Leadership and management

Implementation of the new Ofsted EIF will involve three interlinked elements:

• Top-level view:

Inspectors and leaders start with a top-level view of the school's curriculum, exploring what is on offer, to whom and when, leaders' understanding of curriculum intent and sequencing, and why these choices were made.

• Deep dive:

A 'deep dive', which involves gathering evidence on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact over a sample of subjects, topics or aspects. This is done in collaboration with leaders, teachers and pupils. The intent of the deep dive is to seek to interrogate and establish a coherent evidence base on quality of education. A 'deep dive' will involve conversations with senior leaders and subject coordinators, lesson visits, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with teachers and listening to pupils.

• Bringing it together:

Inspectors will bring the evidence together to widen coverage and to test whether any issues identified during the deep dives are systemic. This will usually lead to school leaders bringing forward further evidence and inspectors gathering additional evidence. The 'Quality of education' judgement is at the heart of the inspection process and will be based upon the examination of and judgement about the curriculum, teaching, assessment and standards.

This will involve close attention being given to the so-called 'three *Is*': **Intent, Implementation and Impact**.

In turn, these three aspects of the education concern

what is conceived (the vision),

what is taught (the provision) and

what is experienced (the outcome)

In preparation for a school inspection, RE coordinators/subject leads, along with class teachers who are delivering the subject, will need to think carefully about each of these elements.

Intent

This will focus on the vision for RE; the clarity of understanding of the subject's role, purpose and value; how these objectives are expressed within the school's RE policy; the planning of the subject to demonstrate coherence, progression, balance and structure, based on the syllabus for Religious Education that has been adopted in each school; and the extent to which the RE curriculum reflects the school's local cultural, religious and wider belief context.

Implementation

This will involve the inspectors making judgements about the subject knowledge of teachers responsible for teaching the subject; the availability and quality of training and other professional development opportunities in Religious Education; the ability of teachers to develop the understanding amongst pupils of key concepts and their engagement in discussion and reflection; the extent to which pupils' work is checked and any misunderstandings are addressed; and the capacity of pupils to embed religious concepts in their long term memories so that they can be both spoken about and applied in a fluent and constructive way.

Impact

This part of the inspection process will involve inspectors in following through the vision, plans and teaching of the subject by making judgements about: the depth of knowledge and understanding of pupils in RE; the progress that pupils are making in the subject; and the ability of pupils to show that they know more, remember more and can do more as a result of the teaching they have received.

The 'deep dive' method may be used to focus on this element of the inspection process. The table overleaf includes a number of questions that RE coordinators may find helpful as they prepare for the inspection of the subject in the context of each of these 'three *Is*'

INTENT

- What is the school's vision for Religious Education?
- What value is attached to the subject?
- Which religious traditions are to be investigated?
- Is the subject adequately resourced?
- Are visits and visitors included with the curriculum plan for Religious Education?
- Has the curriculum been planned in order to promote progression?
- Has the learning been appropriately differentiated so that all pupils, including those with SEND, can fulfil their potential and demonstrate progress?
- Is there an expectation that children will develop their knowledge, understanding, skills, awareness, values and vocabulary in Religious Education as they study it?
- Has attention been given to the embedding of ideas, concepts and principles relating to Religious Education within children's long-term memories?
- Has assessment for and of learning been carefully planned?

IMPLEMENTATION

- Are coherent plans available for those responsible for teaching the subject?
- Have clear learning objectives, in the form of key questions, been set out for the units and lessons in the plans for Religious Education?
- Do the teachers have an expert knowledge of Religious Education?
- Do the lessons incorporate a variety of teaching and learning strategies?
- Is the teaching of Religious Education creative, enthusiastic and inspiring?
- Are resources, such as religious artefacts and art, used in the lessons?
- Is assessment for and of learning embedded within lesson delivery?
- Do pupils learn from as well as about religion and belief?
- Are pupils motivated, positive and committed to the subject?
- Are the units, lessons and lesson activities coherent and logically ordered?
- Is the teaching of Religious Education open, objective and balanced?
- Does Religious Education promote respect for all religions and beliefs?

IMPACT

- Are most pupils achieving, or exceeding, their age-appropriate expectation for RE as referenced in the assessment section in this AS?
- Are pupils who are facing barriers to learning, including pupils with SEND, able to access learning and succeed in RE?
- Is there clear evidence that pupils are progressing as they move through the year groups in their knowledge and understanding of, and their reflection on, religious, ethical, philosophical and spiritual matters?
- Have children developed mastery of certain central concepts and ideas in Religious Education as an outcome of their study of the subject?
- Are pupils able to articulate a clear sense of the value and purpose of Religious Education?
- As an outcome of their learning in RE, are pupils able to make sense of their own and others' religious and non-religious beliefs?
- Are pupils being effectively prepared to play a constructive role within a religiously and culturally diverse society?

How the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus supports Ofsted inspections- the Expectations, Progression and Achievement in Religious Education

The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) places greater emphasis than ever on the role of subjects in setting high standards of learning.

This syllabus is carefully designed to support teachers in the following inspection priorities for

Intent

Implementation and

Impact.

Inspectors look for an RE curriculum which has similar ambitions to the National Curriculum subject orders.

This syllabus offers such a curriculum, and requires schools to provide time, staff leadership and investment in training to ensure that pupil entitlements to quality RE are met.

Intent -setting the intentions for RE

We support schools to clearly establish their own intentions for learning through our vision, aims and themes.

We also advise on which religions are to be studied in each key stage.

Implementation

This syllabus supports the implementation of a high quality and ambitious RE curriculum. It is intended to be intellectually challenging and personally enriching for all learners.

The specific themes of **Explore Engage and Reflect** support the implementation of this syllabus.

These three curriculum themes are supported by six broad dimensions woven into Programmes of Study:

1. Beliefs, teachings and sources
2. Practices and ways of life
3. Expressing meaning
4. Identity, diversity and belonging
5. Meaning, purpose and truth
6. Values and commitments

The Programmes of Study are woven into every unit of work to enable lesson by lesson and unit by unit progress towards the age-related outcomes for pupils in each year group including the end of key stage 3 and 4 and post 16 outcomes which includes GCSE expectations.

The impact of the curriculum on pupils

We have specified the main progression points in the assessment section of this syllabus.

These assessment outcomes are woven into every unit of work.

The age-related expectations can be used as a whole to provide an overview of the reasonable expectation of achievement across the three themes for each year group.

For each statement a pupil can be assessed as:-

- working at greater depth within the expected standard (GDS)
- working at the expected standard (EXS)
- or working towards the expected standard (WTS):

Legal Framework/Requirements

The position of religious education in the school curriculum has been consolidated through a succession of primary legislation, from the Education Act of 1944 through to the Education Act of 1996 and the School Standards and Framework Act of 1998

Religious Education (RE) is for all pupils

- There is a statutory requirement and a legal pupil entitlement for schools to provide a basic and broad and balanced curriculum.
- This consists of the national curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education (RE)
- RE is part of the basic and broad and balanced curriculum. It **must** be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the sixth form.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the RE curriculum. [Section 386 Education Act 1996] (or students can withdraw themselves if they are aged 18 or over)
- It is the duty of school leaders (this includes trustees and governors) to ensure that this statutory requirement is met. [The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Schedule 19]
- Special schools should ensure that every pupil receives RE 'as far as is practicable'.

RE is locally determined, not nationally, but requirements vary for different types of schools

- A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE recommended by an Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by a local authority.
- 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 practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. [Section 375 Education Act 1996]. The exploration of non-religious worldviews should also be included.
- All Local Authorities (LAs) are required to establish a Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE). This Council has the duty of advising the LA on all aspects of RE.
- Local Authority Maintained/ Community / Voluntary Controlled schools without a religious character **must** follow the locally agreed syllabus.
- Foundation Schools and Voluntary Controlled schools with a religious character **must** follow the locally agreed syllabus.
- In Academies and Free schools, RE should be provided as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and in line with requirements for Agreed Syllabuses. The requirements for the type of RE that an academy provides, will be set out in their funding agreement. For schools without a faith designation, this will usually mirror the requirements for local authority - maintained schools without a religious character.
- Academies may use the locally agreed syllabus, or a different locally agreed syllabus (with the permission of the SACRE concerned) or devise their own curriculum. OFSTED expects Academies to provide an RE curriculum 'of similar ambition' to the subject orders of the National Curriculum. This Staffordshire agreed syllabus has been written to support academies in our local area to meet the requirements of their funding agreement and is warmly commended to them. Academies which were formerly Voluntary Aided schools should follow the guidance for Voluntary Aided schools.
- Voluntary-aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus. Church of England schools (including church academies and church free schools) should provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied. This can be achieved by using the agreed syllabus.

Please note-

The above information also applies to the teaching of RE in schools with Sixth Forms.

The effectiveness of denominational education in schools with a religious character such as Roman Catholic, Church of England and Methodist schools, is evaluated during the Statutory Section 48 Inspection.

Despite education policy changes, the legal requirement for RE for **all** registered pupils remains unchanged. RE is an entitlement for all pupils on the roll of every school, unless they have been withdrawn by their parents from RE.



In Staffordshire, schools that are required to follow the Agreed Syllabus are deemed to be meeting their statutory duties when:

- Religious Education (RE) is planned and taught in such a way as to ensure pupils’ entitlement to the learning experiences set out in the programme of learning for each key stage
- The age-related expectations are used to plan for learning, assessment and progression.
- Reasonable time is made available for the study of RE. The guidelines can be found below:
- Pupils at Key Stage 4 study Christianity and at least three other faiths
- At all other key stages schools focus on the teaching of Christianity whilst making pupils aware of the existence and, where possible, the broad perspectives and features of other faiths and non-religious world views as appropriate.

In addition, although not part of the legal requirement, the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) strongly recommends that the guidelines outlined here are followed.

- The table below is used as a guideline for time allocation for RE

Reception/Key Stage 1	36 hours per year
Key Stage 2	45 hours per year
Key Stage 3	45 hours per year
Key Stage 4	40 hours per year
Post 16	Allocation of time for RE for all should be clearly identifiable. Sufficient time to ensure the legal entitlement is met ensuring at least four of the concepts in the programme of study are studied.

- sufficient evidence of pupils’ achievement is recorded to allow for an overall ‘best fit’ standard of achievement to be assigned to each pupil at the end of each year
- on transfer from key stage to key stage or school to school, teachers should provide the following information:

A long-term plan identifying how the programme of study has been delivered during the most recent keystage and a best fit standard of achievement for each pupil.

Ensuring your setting is compliant

Legal requirements

Religious Education (RE) should be provided as part of the basic curriculum for all registered pupils attending a maintained school. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE and are not obliged to state their reasons for withdrawal. The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act (the 1998 Act) defined new categories of maintained schools; the rules about the provision of RE differ in some categories, as follows:

- Community/Maintained Schools are controlled by the local authority (LA). RE **must** be taught according to the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus of the LA.
- Foundation Schools. RE is taught according to the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus, unless the schools are of a religious character, in which case their RE is characterised by their Trust Deed.
- Voluntary Aided (VA) schools are those schools originally founded by voluntary bodies but aided from public funds. RE should be taught according to their Trust Deed.
- Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools were originally founded by voluntary bodies but are now controlled and entirely funded and maintained/controlled by the LA. RE must be taught according to the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus, but parents may request that RE should be provided in accordance with the Trust Deed.
- Special Schools should provide RE for all their pupils as far as practicable, according to the status of the school.
- Schools with Sixth Forms must provide RE for all pupils in the sixth form in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus.
- Academies are independent schools. Pupils' entitlement to RE should be provided as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in accordance with the requirements for Agreed Syllabuses.
- Free Schools are independent schools; however, as a condition of their grant, they must make provision for pupils' entitlement to RE in accordance with the requirements for Agreed Syllabuses.
- Sixth Form Colleges and Further Education Colleges must provide RE for all students who wish to receive it.

Staffordshire SACRE recognises the independence of Academies and Free Schools.

However, it commends this Agreed Syllabus to them as a constructive and collaborative way to meet their legal requirements in RE.

Acknowledgements

The Working Group

Rev Preb Michael Metcalf, SACRE Chair
Sam Kirwan, St Dominics Brewood
Mary Gale, Associate Consultant to Staffordshire SACRE and CEO to MGC consultancy
Staffordshire NATRE group
Doxey Primary School

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Committee D: Local Authority

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Paul Northcott
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Co-opted Members of Staffordshire SACRE

Appendix 1
Planning examples

Appendix 2
Assessment examples

Appendix 3
Resources to support

Appendix 4
Useful websites

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
29th June 2022**

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
Reports on RE**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present members of the SACRE with RE reports and information recently published such as the RE Report card and the Draft Handbook published by the REC on Religion and World views in the classroom: developing a world views approach

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/REC-Worldviews-Project-Draft-Handbook-double-pages.pdf>

2 Summary

- 2.1 Members of the SACRE will receive a copy of the above for scrutiny and information

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 That members of the SACRE receive and read the documents

4 Background

- 4.1 The 1988 Education Act made it compulsory for each Local Authority (LA) to set up a Standing Advisory Council in Religious Education (SACRE) who would be able to address RE aspects within schools.

5 Equal Opportunities

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

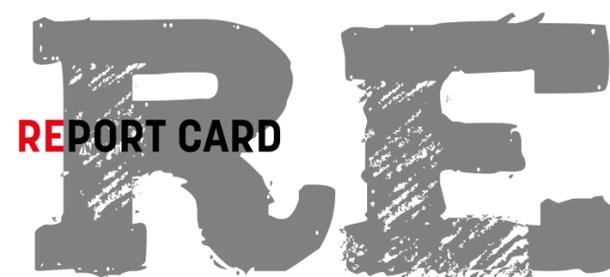
6 Financial implications

- 6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer

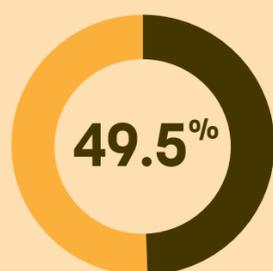
Mary Gale 07816374873

A REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



VALUE
OF THE QUALIFICATION

IN THE LAST DECADE THE NUMBER OF PUPILS IN ENGLAND ENTERING A FULL GCSE RS COURSE INCREASED BY **29.7%**



INCREASE IN A-LEVEL ENTRIES FOR RS

SINCE 2003 BEATING GEOGRAPHY, LAW AND HISTORY²



RE IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ENABLES PUPILS TO TAKE THEIR PLACE WITHIN A DIVERSE MULTI-RELIGIOUS AND MULTI-SECULAR SOCIETY. AT ITS BEST, IT IS INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGING AND PERSONALLY ENRICHING.³

OFSTED RE RESEARCH REVIEW MAY 2021

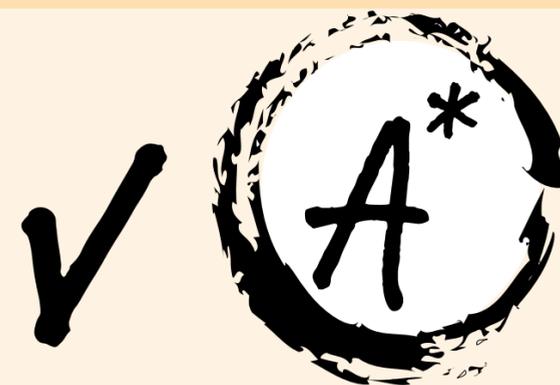


HIGHER ATTAINMENT 8 SCORES ON AVERAGE IN SCHOOLS WITH HIGHER RATES OF ENTRY FOR GCSE RS⁴



95% of teachers say that the subject is more or equally relevant than ten years ago⁵

ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS AND CHALLENGING, RE STUDENTS GO ON TO STUDY AT THE UK'S TOP UNIVERSITIES AND ENTER CAREERS IN LAW, MEDICINE, POLITICS AND JOURNALISM⁶



¹ <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/call-for-national-plan-as-religious-studies-gcse-entries-slip/>

² <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/news07-20-2/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education#conclusion>

⁴ <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/does-studying-rs-gcse-improve-your-overall-academic-attainment/>

⁵ <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/how-satisfied-are-re-teachers/>

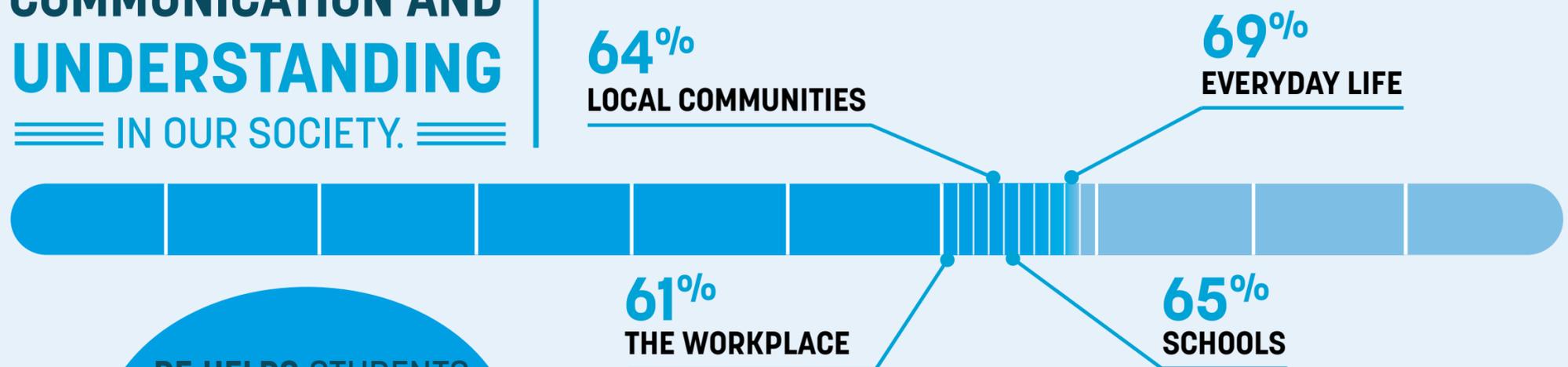
⁶ <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/08/04/encourage-students-with-a-humanities-background-to-become-doctors/>

RE IN SOCIETY

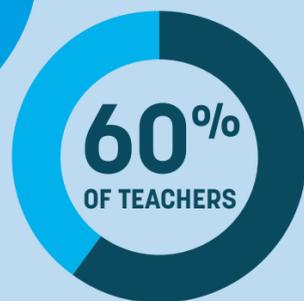
64% of the **UK adult population** think an education in **religion and worldviews** (or RE) is an important part of the **school curriculum**.⁷

HIGH-QUALITY RE
IS THE BACKBONE OF
COMMUNICATION AND
UNDERSTANDING
IN OUR SOCIETY.

AROUND TWO-THIRDS OF UK ADULTS SAY IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BELIEFS OF OTHERS IN:



RE HELPS STUDENTS
UNDERSTAND AND
DEBATE THE BIGGEST
ISSUES OF THE DAY⁸



DRAW INSPIRATION
FROM **DISCUSSING**
TOPICS IN THE NEWS

The public also recognises RE's positive impact on society. In a 2021 survey a majority believed RE can:

- 69%** Help young people gain a better understanding of their own beliefs
- 71%** Foster mutual understanding of different beliefs among young people
- 65%** Provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about other people

GOOD RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREATES
INDEPENDENT AND CRITICAL THINKERS, PREPARED FOR THE
DIVERSITY OF BELIEF
IN MODERN BRITAIN AND
THE WIDER WORLD.



⁷ Religion & Worldview survey by Savanta on behalf of Culham St Gabriel's Trust, June 2021

⁸ <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/how-satisfied-are-re-teachers/> Page 68

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

 Time spent on the subject is **improving in some areas:**

OVER 95% of primary teachers report time spent on teaching RE has increased or stayed the same

46% of academies without a religious character have reported an increase in time to teach RE⁹



The 2021 Ofsted Research Review identified barriers to high-quality RE teaching in schools including:¹⁰

Insufficient time to teach an ambitious RE curriculum 

A lack of a 'scholarly approach'

Insufficient professional development for teachers of RE

Some teachers embedding **unhelpful misconceptions**



Gaps in teacher subject knowledge



However, **too many schools** are **breaking the law** by not teaching RE

34% of academies report no timetabled RE¹¹



Around 500 secondary schools still report **zero hours** of RE provision in Year 11¹²

RE also continues to be neglected on the school timetable in favour of **EBacc** subjects: **On average 5 hours** of RE are allocated to each 'teacher of RE' at **Key Stage 3** as opposed to **7** for history¹³



SCHOOLS MUST DO MORE TO ENSURE THEY PROVIDE THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF HIGH-QUALITY RE PROVISION FOR ALL STUDENTS ACROSS THE YEAR GROUPS



⁹ <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/over-95-of-primary-teachers-report-time-spent-on-teaching-re-has-increased-or-stayed-the-same/>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

¹² <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/NSS%202021%20Infographic.pdf>

¹³ www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/288/theology-religious-studies.pdf



GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

“ THE GOVERNMENT FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT RE IS IMPORTANT. GOOD QUALITY RE IS ESSENTIAL IN DEVELOPING CHILDREN’S KNOWLEDGE OF BRITISH VALUES AND TRADITIONS, AND THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES. RE IS A VITAL PART OF FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING AMONG DIFFERENT FAITHS AND BELIEFS...”



MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCHOOL STANDARDS, ROBIN WALKER



YET DESPITE THIS...

£0 SPENT ON RE PROJECTS BETWEEN 2016-2021

AT A TIME WHEN:¹⁴

**ENGLISH:
£28.5
MILLION**

**MUSIC:
£387
MILLION**

**MATHS:
£154
MILLION**

**SCIENCE:
£56
MILLION**

AMIDST A DECADE LONG CRISIS IN ATTRACTING NEW TALENT:

The 2021-22 teacher training bursary for RE was scrapped despite RE teacher recruitment targets not being met for nine of the last ten years.¹⁵



AND A LACK OF RE SPECIALISM IN SCHOOLS:

25% of RE lessons are taught by teachers with no post A-level qualification in the subject. Three times as many as history (**8%**).¹⁶



AND A FALL IN GCSE ENTRIES

Progress made in GCSE entries since 2010 is starting to unravel. Between 2016 and 2021 entries for the full course fell by almost **20%**.¹⁷

WORDS NEED TO BE BACKED UP WITH ACTION



¹⁴ <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/NATRE%20News/REPU%20March%20Roundtable%20Report.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/NATRE%20News/REPU%20March%20Roundtable%20Report.pdf>

¹⁶ DfE School workforce census (NATRE Freedom of Information request 2019)

¹⁷ <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/GCSE%20results%20media%20release%20FINAL%202012-08-21.pdf>

THE FUTURE OF RE



WE WANT A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION
IN RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS
FOR ALL PUPILS IN ALL SCHOOLS,
TAUGHT BY WELL-QUALIFIED AND
TRAINED TEACHERS

WE CAN ACHIEVE THIS BY:

1

REINSTATING THE
TEACHER TRAINING
BURSARY FOR RE



2

SCHOOLS ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY
PROVISION BY ADOPTING THE
VISION FOR RE SET OUT IN THE 2018
CoRE REPORT RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS:
THE WAY FORWARD

3

OFSTED WORKING WITH THOSE
SCHOOLS NOT CURRENTLY
TEACHING SUFFICIENT RE
TO ENSURE THEY COMPLY
WITH THE LAW

4

GOVERNMENT RECOGNISING PUBLIC,
PARENT AND PUPIL SUPPORT
FOR THE SUBJECT BY PROPERLY
FUNDING IT IN LINE WITH THE
REST OF THE CURRICULUM

I've really enjoyed the last two years studying RE, for not only the deeper understanding of life it intends, but the analytical mind it encourages.

NAT, YEAR 9

WHAT PUPILS SAY:



RE is the one time in school where you can talk, listen and try to make sense of people, events and beliefs in the world.

SHREYA, YEAR 10

THE FINAL WORD:

In neglecting religious education, we leave a gaping hole in our school curriculum. It leaves young people unprepared for the ethical, moral and religious debates that influence life in modern Britain and the wider world. Put simply, we miss an opportunity to positively enhance our children's and our society's future.

SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY MP, FATHER OF THE HOUSE



RE Council of England and Wales

Draft Handbook

Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom: developing a Worldviews Approach

Stephen Pett

Contents

Foreword	1
1 The purposes of this Handbook	2
2 Outline and rationale for this development	5
3 What do people mean by ‘religion’?	7
4 What do people mean by ‘worldview’?	8
5 The value of worldviews in terms of content and approach	12
6 Subject knowledge in school and community contexts	14
7 Selecting content	16
8 Purposes for RE in a religion and worldviews approach	17
9 Revised National Statement of Entitlement	18
10 Developing pupils’ personal worldviews	22
11 Making good progress: models	24
12 Fulfilling the National Statement of Entitlement	25
13 Connecting the NSE with current practice	26
14 Applying disciplinary methods	28
15 How to use the NSE to develop a syllabus	29
16 Using the NSE to develop questions and construct units of work	34
17 To what extent is this new?	40
18 How does this approach relate to GCSE?	41
Appendix 1. Making good progress: three models	42
Endnotes	46
Acknowledgements	48

Acronyms:

ASC: Agreed Syllabus Conference

CoRE: Commission on RE

CoRE report: *Religion and Worldviews: The way forward*, report published 2018, following the two-year independent commission set up by the REC

DfE: Department for Education

MAT: Multi-academy trust

NSE: National Statement of Entitlement (see p. 20)

OFSTED: Office for Standards in Education

REC: Religious Education Council of England and Wales

SACRE: Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Foreword

This draft Handbook is the outcome of the first phase of a three-year project on behalf of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC). The aim of the project is to take the idea of a Religion and Worldviews approach, as advocated by the Commission on Religious Education’s final report, and see what it looks like when applied to a syllabus or curriculum.

The Handbook is provisional in its current form. Its primary purpose is to inform three framework-writing teams over the next 18-24 months. These teams have been appointed by the REC, after an open tendering process. They comprise team leaders, teachers and others involved in education (such as members of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education [SACREs], curriculum leaders in multi-academy trusts [MATs], academics, teacher trainers and advisers). Their task is to apply the draft Handbook to the creation of a framework for RE for their own specific contexts. Using the new religion and worldviews approach, as described in the draft Handbook, the frameworks will set out, for example, choices as to content selection at each key stage to enable teachers to apply a religion and worldviews approach in their own schools.

This is a project, not a consultation. The independent Commission on RE 2016-2018 (CoRE), set up by the REC, was an extensive consultation and this project is a further step in the direction set out by the Commission’s final report, *Religion and Worldviews: the way forward*. The draft Handbook will be used by the framework-development teams, but it will also be tested by that process. A final amended Handbook will be published in spring/summer 2024, along with three exemplar frameworks that illustrate how the Handbook can be interpreted and applied in different ways to suit different contexts. These frameworks will be accompanied by sample units of work and pupil responses. The project materials will be freely available to support and inform SACREs, MATs, dioceses and other parties interested in developing syllabuses and curricula for their contexts.

We are mindful of the interest in the RE community around this next step towards an education in religion and worldviews, and so are making this draft Handbook publicly available. We hope to generate interest and to learn from how it is received, so as to support the development of the best version by the end of the project. If you would like to comment, please email info@religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk.

Stephen Pett
Project Leader

Trevor Cooling
Project Director

May 2022

Draft Handbook written by Stephen Pett
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The purposes of this Handbook

In 2018, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) published the report from the independent Commission on RE (CoRE), the result of a two-year consultation, which sets out a vision for a change in RE to a 'religion and worldviews' approach^[1]. This report has stimulated wide interest, dialogue and debate among diverse members of the RE community and beyond^[2].

Subsequently, the REC published an academic literature review into the term 'worldviews' in relation to religion in academic disciplines^[3]. There followed a series of conversations between academics from different disciplinary areas, responding to the CoRE report and the literature review. These conversations were recorded, interpreted and written up as a set of discussion papers^[4].

The REC is currently running a three-year project, supported by the Templeton World Charity Foundation, to develop guidance for syllabus writers and curriculum developers for implementing a religion and worldviews approach. This draft Handbook is the outcome of the first phase of this project.

- It takes forward the vision of the CoRE report, building on the rich traditions of religious education in Britain.
- It provides an updated vision of the subject which approaches it from the perspective of worldviews, to help pupils make sense of the diverse, complex world around them, in relation to religion, religions and non-religion.
- It reimagines the subject, so that it is more inclusive of and relevant to children and young people, whose worldviews may range across the secular and/or religious.
- It examines the claim from the CoRE report that 'everyone has a worldview', recognising that 'no one stands nowhere' and that everyone encounters the world from their perspective, with their assumptions, experiences and context.
- It accommodates the idea that 'worldviews' include religious and non-religious, organised and individual worldviews, plural, diverse and changing.
- Looking through this worldview 'lens' shifts the focus in the classroom from the experience of a minority of people who identify as religious in the UK to the study of a universal human experience as it encounters religion, belief and practice.

This approach means enabling all pupils to become open-minded, critical participants of public discourse, who make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion, belief and practice which shape the global landscape. It is a subject for all pupils, whatever their own family background and personal worldviews.

This reshaped subject seeks to reflect the current and future needs of pupils, such as in relation to, for example, diverse identities in a multi-religious and multi-secular world, and matters of justice (e.g. climate, race, equality). It supports the application of current developments in religious education, such as ways of knowing, multidisciplinary approaches and hermeneutics.

The purposes of this Handbook are to:

- present a 'national statement of entitlement' (NSE):

At the heart of this draft Handbook is the NSE (see pp. 18–19), which sets out a clear description of an education in religion and worldviews to which all pupils have an entitlement. This NSE can be used to inspire and guide curriculum development, setting out expectations and a benchmark against which schools' quality of provision can be evaluated.

- equip syllabus and curriculum developers:

This draft Handbook gives a rationale for the religion and worldviews approach, including the NSE, and then provides guidance on how to apply these to the development of a syllabus/curriculum. It recognises that there are flexible ways of doing this that will reflect the context and setting of local authorities, dioceses, multi academy trusts [MATs] and schools.

- set out the nature of a religion and worldviews approach:

This draft Handbook builds on a great deal of development in the subject of RE over decades, and sets out the rationale for its ongoing development, reshaping and reorientating the subject for future decades. An education in religion and worldviews examines the field of study through a worldviews approach, supporting pupils to reflect on and develop their own worldviews, and to make sense of the diverse, complex world around them in relation to religion. It promotes understanding of the diverse and plural nature of worldviews and equips pupils to develop the skills to explore ways of knowing about religion, religions, and religious and non-religious worldviews.

[NOTE: The draft Handbook is primarily written for the framework development teams (see section 1.2 below); this section outlines the purpose of the final Handbook.]

1.1. Who is this Handbook for?

This Handbook is primarily written to assist those of us who are developing syllabuses and curricula for RE with a religion and worldviews approach, including local authorities, SACREs, agreed syllabus conferences and curriculum leaders in MATs.

It is intended to be relevant to schools in England and Wales, including community maintained, academies and free schools with, and without, religious character.

It is intended to be of use to a wide range of people involved in the subject, including those of us with responsibility for the subject in schools both with and without a religious character, school leaders and governors, subject leads and teachers in primary and secondary phases, trainee and early career teachers, their tutors and mentors, inspectors and advisers, examination boards and resource developers.

It is intended to be helpful to people with different worldviews, ranging across religious and non-religious, to understand how an education in religion and worldviews approaches and handles organised and individual worldviews.

It is hoped that it will be of interest to parents, pupils and the wider public, to inform them of the content and purposes of the subject.

1.2 Next steps from this draft Handbook

Phase 2 of the REC project will create exemplar frameworks in the form of case studies to model diverse ways of fulfilling the NSE and of approaching an education in religion and worldviews. Phase 3 will create exemplar units of work and some pupil responses to illustrate these models and how they fulfil the NSE.

The REC has appointed (May 2022) three teams of school-linked groups to take the vision and practical guidance of the NSE and the draft Handbook and apply them to their own contexts.

This will illustrate how the NSE, and its associated philosophy, translates into a syllabus and curriculum for schools in a specific context. The aim is to equip and inspire other syllabus writers and curriculum developers to use the NSE to develop their own documents for use in their own schools. The published frameworks will outline the process taken, including challenges and how these were addressed, as well as the exemplar framework for each context. Lessons learned in this process will be used by the project leader to adjust and amend the draft Handbook prior to publication of the final Handbook at the end of the project in spring/summer 2024.

1.3 Key terms

The draft Handbook will refer to **religious education (RE)** as the term that is currently in use in legislation and guidance. The Commission on RE recommendation that the subject be officially renamed “Religion and Worldviews” would require legislation, whereas this draft Handbook is encouraging a shift in approach that can happen regardless of legislative change. However, this does not prevent schools from renaming the subject as suits their context or needs.

The phrase **‘religion and worldviews’** is not intended to imply a list (‘examples of religions plus non-religious worldviews such as humanism, secularism, etc.’), not least because the term worldviews encompasses religious and other perspectives on life. Instead, it denotes a relationship between religion and worldviews, to be explored in the subject of RE. The **worldviews approach** presented in this draft Handbook is sometimes described as **‘an education in religion and worldviews’** as a way of delineating the scope of the subject. This includes matters and questions raised by the study of religion, acknowledges that the nature of worldviews is itself explored and interrogated within the subject, and that the subject entails the study of worldviews in relation to religion and non-religion.

The draft Handbook uses the term **‘worldviews’** to include **religious and non-religious worldviews**, recognising that these terms are themselves not binary: there is a fluidity and flexibility between religion and non-religion, and an individual or personal worldview may well incorporate aspects of both. ‘Non-religion’ is itself complex and stands in relation to religion and to secularity in different ways^[5].



Outline and rationale for this development

2.1 Why do we need a change?

The move towards an education in religion and worldviews is not just a change of name. It encompasses an adjustment in the way that content is selected and how it is approached within the subject.

There are many elements in play here, including:

Scholarly understandings

Academic study of religion is increasingly recognising the limitation of the ‘world religions paradigm’ – the idea that there are six major world religions, and lots of minor ones, and that they have a set of core beliefs and practices that we can neatly package up and present in lessons. Scholars point out the contested nature of the term ‘religion’. They note the contrast between teachings of traditions and how these are experienced and lived out in people’s lives.

They point to the complex reality of lived religion, which is less neat and tidy, more fluid, and always tied to particular contexts. It is time for pupils to have a more realistic encounter with the world of religion and belief.

Demographics: the rise of non-religiousness

In terms of Census data, in 2001, 15.5% of England and Wales said they had no religion. By 2011 this increased to 25%. British Social Attitudes Surveys from 2016 on have regularly indicated that this is just over 50%. The 2014 and 2016 European Social Surveys show that among young people in the UK (aged 16-29) 70% say they have no religion, and this will be the experience of many teachers of pupils under age sixteen. Recognising the wider global picture of the rise of religion, in contrast with the picture in the UK, Europe and north America, the study of ‘non-religion’ (by many names) is an increasingly important scholarly field and it needs to be part of the school study of religion.¹

Content selection

The increased complexity and scope of the field of study, as set out in the above paragraphs, also increase the challenge of content overload. It is simply not possible to study everything, and so decisions have to be made on content selection. Making such decisions on the basis of numerical or cultural dominance is problematic, and a new rationale needs to be provided.

Equality of provision

Across the UK, there are many examples of excellent RE provision and practice, but also evidence of too many schools not meeting their statutory requirement, nor providing all pupils with their entitlement to high quality RE. In part, the shift to a religion and worldviews approach is to reinvigorate the subject, to reinforce its importance as part of children and young people’s education in a multi-religious and multi-secular world, and to reinspire those schools currently neglecting the subject.

¹The final Handbook will include up to date data, such as the 2021 Census data, when available.

2.2 How does a worldviews approach address these developments?

The idea of **worldviews** offers an approach that revitalises the subject, taking account of scholarly developments and demographic changes. A worldviews approach accommodates the study of the fluidity within and between religious traditions, and the diversity of identities and ways of living and thinking among the non-religious. It also places the development of pupils' perspectives and assumptions within the academic processes of the subject. Their perspectives matter: they affect pupils' engagement and encounter with the content of the subject. Pupils need opportunities to recognise, reflect on and develop their personal worldview, and to understand how their worldview provides a lens through which they encounter those of others.

The aims of this move towards an education in religion and worldviews, therefore, include the following:

To present a reimagining of RE so that it is more inclusive of, and relevant to, children and young people, whose own worldviews may range across the secular and/or religious, by drawing on relevant scholarly insights.

To provide an academically updated vision of the subject which approaches the study of religion from the perspective of worldviews – incorporating religious and non-religious worldviews, individual and organised, plural and diverse – to help pupils make sense of the diverse, complex world around them, in relation to religion.



What do people mean by 'religion'?

On the one hand, the term 'religion' functions quite easily – we generally know what we mean when we talk about religions, or when we say something or someone is religious. On the other hand, the term is contested, with much debate and many theories.

Some definitions:

- focus on beliefs, such as belief in a deity and a supernatural dimension to existence
- focus on the ways of thinking and living of adherents
- look at the function religions play within communities and societies
- allow for a divine origin of religion and the reality of a transcendent Being and realm
- see religion as a human construct, inextricably linked with culture

So we are not able to pin 'religion' down to a single use – nor do we want to. Any account of religion is inevitably tied to a context, and any definition of religion is likewise going to arise from a context or school of thought with its own assumptions. As with many other contested terms (such as democracy, politics, culture) the term 'religion' cannot simply be taken as a neutral description of the way the world is^[6].

Part of the argument for seeing 'religion' as the focus of study for our subject is because it draws attention to the contested nature of the subject content. Instead of only studying examples of 'religions', the subject includes studying the nature and implications of the term itself. This brings into focus some of the challenges raised by scholars involved in studying religion, such as:

- the role of the European context – specifically applying a Protestant Christian worldview – in the development and categorisation of the term 'religion', such that it was seen as the norm against which all other 'religions' were classified, setting up a kind of hierarchy

- how this is embedded in the 'world religions paradigm', where religions are seen as separate entities, with a core set of common and comparable characteristics (reflecting the characteristics of Protestant Christianity)
- how the 'world religions paradigm' privileges organised or institutional religions and, in particular, those with established orthodoxies and doctrines, hierarchies and power
- how developments in (post-)secularity increasingly blur the boundaries between religion and non-religion, where 'religious' people may believe, belong or behave in 'non-religious' ways, and 'non-religious' people accommodate 'religious' aspects to their worldviews and ways of living.

The religion and worldviews approach takes account of the significant religious traditions in their changing contexts, balancing organised expressions alongside lived experiences of individuals and communities. A simple illustration might be a shift in language from a study of Islam, Buddhism and Christianity to a study of Muslims, Buddhists and Christians. This still requires rich encounters with traditions, such as their ancient roots and contemporary expressions, their core beliefs and teachings, great works of literary and artistic achievement alongside acts of service, justice, courage and resistance, and the varied impact they make on individuals, societies and the world – including some of their darker legacies. The worldviews approach allows these encounters to be selected to illuminate and illustrate how ideas, beliefs and practices arise, recognising how they are all shaped and reshaped by their contexts – including historical, geographical, social, cultural, political, and theological, for example.

4

What do people mean by ‘worldview’?

There are many definitions of ‘worldview’. Alongside religion, it is another term that sparks debate. Fundamental to the worldviews approach advocated in this draft Handbook is the idea that everyone has a worldview – or at least, the idea that ‘no one stands nowhere’ – everyone experiences the world from their own context, experience and perspective.

This does **NOT** mean:

- that everyone has a ready set of coherent responses to a set of ultimate questions about life, the universe and everything. A person’s worldview may be unconsidered and even unconscious, drawing on a wide variety of influences, and containing contradictions.
- that only people with a religious worldview have a worldview. As part of a religious community’s nurture, religious people may have consciously learnt about and practised their tradition, and may have a considered worldview that reflects this; or they may have unconsciously absorbed ideas and ways of living and being that have shaped and coloured their worldview, so that it is recognisably a religious worldview. Non-religious people – sometimes in transparent and deliberate ways, and sometimes unconsciously – will also have absorbed ideas and ways of living and being from their own context, which may have had secular or religious influences, to different degrees. These will shape the way non-religious people encounter, view, and live in the world.

This draft Handbook’s entry-point definition is:

‘Worldview’ describes the way in which a person encounters, interprets, understands and engages with the world.

- This encompasses a person’s beliefs, attitudes, identities, assumptions, intentions, values, hopes and ways of being in the world.
- It will affect, and be affected by, a person’s thoughts, emotions, experiences, encounters, desires, commitments, actions and reactions; much of this is individual, but much will be shared too – people are not islands.
- A person’s worldview will be influenced by their context, in terms of time, place, language, sex, gender, the communities that surround them, ethnicity, nationality, economics, history, class, access to political power etc. (Some contextual influences will be obvious and recognised; some will not.)
- It will change as a person grows and faces new experiences, encounters new people and situations, and engages in learning new knowledge. (Some changes may be conscious and deliberate, some may not.)
- This means a person’s worldview may be visible or invisible to the individual, but it will show up through their words, attitudes and actions.
- A person’s worldview affects how they interpret the world around them, as they try to make sense of the world they encounter.
- A person’s worldview is about more than religion, even if they are an adherent.
- It might be better to say that a person *inhabits* a worldview rather than *has* one.

4.1 Organised and institutional worldviews

The definition above applies to individuals and their personal worldviews, recognising that people are not isolated beings but connected to communities, culture and context.

The CoRE report also identified ‘organised’ worldviews as ‘shared among particular groups and sometimes embedded in institutions’, adopting the term ‘institutional’ worldviews for the latter.

The way a worldview might be seen as ‘organised’ or ‘institutional’ will differ. There are global institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church, and the teachings and practices of which might present a Roman Catholic ‘institutional worldview’. The Ismailis might be another example of a global ‘institutional worldview’, with the central authority of the Imam manifested in institutional structures across different nations. Other Muslim groups, while still ‘organised’ might have less tight structures, with variation in practice even within a single local community. The terms organised or institutional worldview describe the way a group or tradition or institution presents itself to the world.

A world religions approach to RE has tended to see the institutions representative of each religion as the focus of study. The religion and worldviews approach explores how communities and individuals interact with these organised or institutional worldviews – how people experience them, and their impact on people’s lives. For some:

- the scope and riches of their tradition are not captured in the austerity of the term ‘institutional worldview’ – instead they experience it as spiritual, dynamic, creative and life-enhancing, for example
- the institution gives a sense of community and identity, without their necessarily subscribing to the institution’s beliefs and practices
- an organised or institutional worldview may have negative effects, oppressing and limiting their identity and personhood

This kind of interaction is what is being explored through examination of community or individual worldviews.

4.2 Studying religion and worldviews

This draft Handbook builds on the understanding of worldviews presented in the CoRE report.

The OFSTED 2021 *Religious Education Research Review*^[7] outlines three types of knowledge that pupils should make progress in:

- **substantive knowledge:** this includes knowledge about religious and non-religious traditions, e.g. core concepts, truth claims, teachings and practices, behaviour and responses of adherents, wider concepts such as spirituality and secularity, and how worldviews work in human life
- **ways of knowing:** this is where pupils learn ‘how to know’ about religion and non-religion, incorporating methods from academic disciplines
- **personal knowledge:** pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study, and of the lived experience of adherents.

The study of the relationship between religion and worldviews is thus a core element of the **substantive content** of the subject.

This substantive content includes **organised/ institutional/ community/ individual worldviews**. These range from precise credal expressions and central teachings to the complex fluidity of individual worldviews within wider traditions.

The methods used to explore, examine and engage with religion and worldviews form part of ‘ways of knowing’.

Note that when this draft Handbook refers to **personal worldviews**, it refers to pupils’ personal worldviews. This connects with OFSTED’s terminology of ‘personal knowledge’. This is a shift from the CoRE report, where personal worldviews referred both to the substantive content of individual worldviews within wider traditions *and* to pupils’ worldviews. This adjustment in the draft Handbook is intended to ensure that when studying *individual* worldviews of adherents in relation to organised/institutional worldviews, no assumptions are implied about pupils’ personal worldviews.

4.3 Points to note

Religion and worldviews

- A religion and worldviews approach examines the dynamic between these terms.
- Part of that dynamic allows for encounter with, and study of, diverse voices and the experiences of individuals within wider 'organised' worldviews. Thus, the individual worldviews of adherents within such organised worldviews come under the content to be studied.

Organised and individual worldviews

- Some organised worldviews may be expressed through widely approved doctrines and practices, set out by official hierarchies, e.g. Christian creeds and catechisms; the Rehat Maryada in Sikh traditions. Some 'organised' worldviews may be embedded in institutions, e.g. the Roman Catholic Church.
- Individuals within these traditions may have an individual worldview that reflects these widely approved teachings to a greater or lesser extent.
- Some involvement with an 'organised' worldview may take the form of devotion by a group to a particular guru or saint, e.g. A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder of ISKCON.
- Some individual worldviews may weave together influences from diverse streams (e.g. be a practising Anglican, with a preference for Celtic Christianity and interest in Zen Buddhism, married to a pagan, and integrating pagan festivals and sensibilities into their living and being).
- Some may have left their religious upbringing behind but retain at least a trace of a religious worldview (e.g. brought up a Catholic, left it all behind in teens and living as non-religious but still practising fasting during Lent).
- In a country like the UK, people may absorb Christianity *and* a secular, liberal worldview, as part of the air they breathe. Weeks and years are shaped by Christian festivals and observances; Christian ideas underpin law, morality, sanctity of life, the legislature, the monarchy. However, the media, TV, film, popular culture, education – much of this presents a secular perspective as the default worldview.

Religious worldviews

- Note that some religious worldviews incorporate the idea of divine revelation – a divine being has communicated the truth about the way the world is and how people should be. People holding these religious worldviews may believe in this kind of revelation, and part of their way of living and being involves adherence to the divine path, a participation in the deity's on-going purpose, a celebration of the goodness, wisdom and mercy of the deity, and/or fear of divine judgment.
- Other traditions may see the idea of the divine as part of a human construct, a powerful metaphor, a transformative idea that motivates and illuminates ways of living, offering wisdom from the ages, refined through experience, conversation and debate, to guide actions.
- Some people within a religious tradition may seek to live in accordance with a sense of cosmic order and truth, and to ever-deepen their sense of connectedness to all life.
- Some people within a religious tradition may say that their own worldview is beside the point – the truth of divine revelation is true regardless of whether their individual worldview lines up, or their way of living matches the moral ideals of their tradition.
- Many people will vigorously defend their worldview because they believe it to be true. The philosopher Michael Polanyi described this as holding beliefs with "universal intent". Beliefs matter to people because their identity is tied up with them.

4.3 Pupils' personal worldviews

Demographic data suggests that, across Britain, most pupils are not part of organised religious traditions, although that does not rule out echoes of religious influences upon their worldviews.

The worldviews approach brings pupils' personal worldviews into play within the study of religion. From the early days in primary school, developing pupils' personal worldviews includes a growing self-awareness of how your autobiography affects your worldview, and how it shapes your encounters in life.

In RE, a religion and worldviews approach involves helping pupils to develop their personal worldview in conversation with the content and methods of study in the subject. As they move through their education, it helps them to make judgements about the content studied, the methods used, and their own perspectives, in the light of evidence and argument. This draws pupils' attention to ideas of critical scholarly 'positionality', as practised in academic study at undergraduate level and beyond.

Intellectual virtues

The development of pupils' personal worldviews thus involves developing some intellectual virtues, such as

- intellectual curiosity
- some humility about the certainty of their own conclusions
- a willingness to learn from others
- developing the habit of careful listening before responding or making judgements, as they recognise the interplay between their own worldview and the worldviews of others in interpreting content
- being prepared to change their mind and adjust their worldview in the light of new encounters, knowledge and experiences.

The development of these intellectual virtues arises (in part) from the modelling of these virtues in the way pupils are taught. The ways that questions are raised and addressed in the classroom, and how the content is handled, will exemplify the kind of openness, humility, curiosity, even-handedness, accuracy, fairness, willingness to be challenged and self-awareness, that the subject wants to promote.

Personal transformation

The subject, as with all school subjects, includes the possibility of personal transformation. The pupil engages with learning about ways of thinking, living and being that are outside of their own experience. The inclusion of pupils' personal worldviews within the educational process draws attention to the possibility that the learning experience might change them, and offers opportunities to reflect on how.

The centrality of pupils' personal worldview development is driven by the entitlement of all children and young people to understand human experience and the way things operate in their own and others' worlds. It is, therefore, part of the identify formation of pupils. They are given opportunities to examine the sources of their own worldviews, and the impact of their contexts on these.

Through the classroom encounters, pupils will develop awareness of how their own worldviews relate with the varied worldviews of others. They will have opportunities to grasp how their worldviews have a bearing on their understanding of, and engagement with, curriculum content. Recognising that this also applies to others is a valuable preparation for life in a world of diverse viewpoints.

While personal worldviews extend beyond matters of religious belief, study of religion (and non-religion) offers opportunities to examine important existential and ethical questions. These include questions around meaning, purpose and truth, identity, diversity, morality, values and commitments, and the accumulated knowledge and understanding arising from centuries of religions and philosophies addressing such questions.

5

The value of worldviews in terms of content and approach

5.1 What is a worldviews approach?

A worldviews approach focuses on how religion(s) and worldviews (religious and non-religious) work, and how we can best go about studying them. It includes all pupils in the enterprise of interrogating the sources of their own developing worldviews and how they may benefit from exploring and engaging critically with the rich and complex heritage of humanity.

The worldviews approach encourages an engagement with some of the scholarly concerns outlined in sections 3 (p. 7) and 4 (p. 8). It self-consciously explores the relationship between the teachings and doctrines of organised worldviews and the beliefs, practice and experience of adherents – what is sometimes called ‘lived religion’.

Of course, any presentation of religion is going to be a limited representation – particularly within the constraints of the classroom time for the subject. But given the impossibility of teaching the totality of six major ‘world religions’ in their diversity, alongside the many other living traditions and the complex web of non-religious worldviews, this approach offers a way of inducting pupils into the study of religion and worldviews, to empower them to be able to handle questions around religion(s), and religious and non-religious worldviews for themselves, within and then beyond the confines of the classroom.

This approach explores the real religious landscape^[9]. It is an educational project – an attempt not to stand outside the worldviews of others but to understand what being inside is all about, recognising that we do this from a particular perspective or worldview ourselves.

This approach draws on hermeneutical understandings, recognising that the encounter between every individual pupil and the subject content takes place in a context, and that is affected by the

worldview of the learner. The approach therefore draws on pupils’ interpretive skills and awareness of how their worldview affects these encounters. At the heart of a worldviews approach is the notion that every human being is an interpreter, and that this subject is teaching them to be ‘wise interpreters’ of life. Zen or humanist or Salafist or secularist approaches to being wise interpreters would be very different. As pupils grow in self-awareness of their assumptions, they are better able to identify, interpret and understand the worldviews of others.

5.2 Advantages of a worldviews approach

- It takes account of the contemporary place of religion, belief, and practice locally, nationally and globally.
- It draws on developments in, for example, academic theology, philosophy, history, education, and the study of religion.
- It addresses the increase in non-religious worldviews in the secular west, within the wider context of the global growth of religion.
- It takes account of sociological categories, such as the spiritual but not religious, and people ‘believing without belonging’ or ‘believing in belonging’, and of the questioning of the category of ‘religion’ across many disciplines.
- It allows for sensitivity around diversity, identity, and legacies of power, for example, while equipping pupils to be able to take part in dialogue with better understanding of the worldviews of others.
- It is inclusive, in that it is based on the idea that everyone has or inhabits a worldview – so learning about any organised or individual worldview offers scope for learning about one’s own.
- It equips pupils for reflecting on, and making choices about, the development of their personal worldview in the context of a complex world.

5.3 What a worldviews approach is *not* doing

There are some potential misunderstandings to address here.

A worldviews approach does not simply take the world religions paradigm and extend it by adding worldviews – whether smaller religious traditions such as the Bahá’í Faith or Paganism, or indigenous traditions, or a range of non-religious worldviews treated as ‘religions’. In this draft Handbook, the approach is centred around the NSE. Pupils are entitled to understand worldviews as set out in that Statement, and the selection of content needs to enable that. The NSE attempts to reduce the challenge of content overload by clearly specifying the scope of the subject.

The approach is not reducing the place of religion within the subject. The dynamic relationship between religion and worldviews cannot be explored without examining religion and religions.

The approach is not arguing that, since everyone has a worldview, this leads to relativism, with all worldviews having equal value. Instead, the substantive content includes the relationship between organised and individual worldviews. This allows for a focus on the beliefs, teachings and practices of religions as well as individual responses within these broader traditions. The personal worldview of the pupil is always the perspective from which the learning is done; how this affects learning is brought into focus within the classroom.

Incorporating pupils’ personal worldviews is not solely about pupils expressing opinions (of course they will have opinions, and these can become informed opinions). The subject aims to support pupils in making informed judgements based on reliable evidence and sound argument, in relation to religion and worldviews.

The statement that ‘everyone has a worldview’ does not mean that everyone identifies with an organised worldview. Some may, of course – and globally, statistics suggest that most people have some sort of identification with an organised worldview of one or more kinds. However, someone’s rejection of, or indifference towards, such organised worldviews is part of their own worldview.

There are ways of understanding worldviews as totalising systems of thought, where to have a worldview is to be able to offer coherent answers to a set of questions that indicate a view on existence, knowledge, meaning, purpose, ethics and behaviour. Some scholars present organised worldviews as being able to offer such a set of answers to ‘worldview-framing’ questions, and these are legitimate areas of study^[9]. The CoRE report and this draft Handbook have a wider understanding of worldviews, such that it indicates the way in which everyone experiences the world from within their own context and experience. As mentioned before, religion may or may not be influential in this way of experiencing the world.

The reframing of RE as an education in religion and worldviews does not imply that religious and non-religious worldviews are studied in equal measure. ‘Worldviews’ here does not function as solely representing non-religious worldviews (see Section 1.3 above).

6

Subject knowledge in school and community contexts

The Commission on RE's final report, *Religion and Worldviews: the way forward*, argued that a response was needed to the challenges faced by the subject, and teaching, of RE. For example:

- the challenge of ever-expanding content to reflect the diversity of worldviews in the UK and beyond, including the rise in non-religiousness
- the challenge of inconsistent provision, including widespread non-compliance with statutory requirements for RE
- the lack of a clear benchmark statement of what constitutes high quality provision, resulting in inequalities in the breadth and depth of pupils' study
- the lack of consistency of approach across schools either with, or without, a religious character

The draft Handbook takes the next step to address these challenges. It revises the original NSE from the CoRE report, and offers a set of organising principles to guide selection of content, to provide a basis for developing syllabuses and curricula, and indicates possible approaches for study. These include examining how worldviews work and introduce different methods to encourage pupils' critical resources for the academic study of religions and worldviews. The NSE gives the basis for mapping progression and showing how later work builds on foundations laid by earlier work.

While it seeks to set a standard across all types of schools, the NSE is flexible in its application, allowing for local creativity and local agreed syllabuses, and including guidelines for dioceses and other religious foundation settings, and curricula for MATs.

6.1 School knowledge about religion and worldviews

Teachers and other educationalists^[10] acknowledge the difference between the kind of knowledge used and created by academics and professionals (e.g. laboratory researchers at the CERN Large Hadron Collider) and the knowledge transmitted

and examined in the classroom (e.g. school physics). For example, 9–11-year-olds learn that gravity is a force. 14–16-year-olds learn that gravity is not a force but a force field. At university, they learn that it is a force field *theory*. This has several implications for an education in religion and worldviews:

- school knowledge about religion and worldviews is not the same as university knowledge; it necessarily involves simplification and selection, which may include teaching some ideas about religion and worldviews that are not wholly accurate but are sufficient at the stage of pupils' learning. That means teaching some ideas about religion and worldviews which are appropriate for the stage of pupils' learning and will become more complex and accurate as they mature in their thinking. For example, primary pupils might learn that karma means 'you reap what you sow'; good actions gain good karma, bad actions earn bad karma. Secondary pupils might learn that understanding of karma differs significantly by tradition, such as the Bhagavad Gita's teaching that, rather than balancing positive and negative karma, only 'desireless actions' that do not result in karma will cut the ties from the wheel of life, death and rebirth (samsara). At university, students might learn that karma may not refer to personal moral consequences, rather to a more generalised ontology of causal connections.
- an additional layer of complexity is that school knowledge about religion and worldviews is not necessarily identical with faith/worldview community knowledge either.

6.2 The relationships between school subject and worldview communities

While it is essential that the substantive content about religious and non-religious worldviews is accurate and fair, this is not the same as presenting the content as the worldview communities would present it.

The school subject of RE – an education in religion and worldviews – is not nurture into any particular worldview. Rather, it equips pupils for an educational endeavour that enables them to understand worldviews – to understand how people engage with the content of religions, aware of a range of responses from those inside and outside the traditions themselves, including lived realities and scholarly perspectives, and how this study illuminates their own worldviews – and how their own worldviews, in turn, illuminate their studies.

This approach will include understanding some of the mainstream teachings or 'orthodoxies' of different traditions, and their varying impact on people within these traditions; input and information from faith and worldview communities will be essential for this. In addition, the subject will also include examining the nature of religion itself, different ways in which it is understood, the implications of privileged voices within these structures, and the findings of scholars within and outside these traditions. For example, adherents within religious traditions may be unaware of critical scholarly material on their traditions (such as biblical scholars questioning the authorship of letters said in the text to be by the apostle Paul; or proposed analyses of Meccan and Medinan surahs by scholars in Islamic studies).

The selection of such material is an educational decision, which needs to be transparent. The NSE offers a set of criteria upon which to base selection, for a syllabus or curriculum. A school's context gives an additional set of criteria. In the language of OFSTED in England, but applying beyond, schools need to think about the appropriate intent behind their curriculum when selecting content, as fitting their school situation.

Part of the educational purpose of a worldviews approach is for pupils to be able to consider who might legitimately represent mainstream and minority voices of a tradition, and why. Pupils will examine the relationship between a range of voices representing the tradition or community and the individual voice of the adherent. Care will need to be taken with the sensitivities of children from families whose traditions are being studied. Research shows the challenge experienced by pupils who encounter a mismatch between the characterisations of the organised worldview presented at school and their own lived experience^[11].

Part of the role of the worldview communities is to be able to support this educational project, such as by providing a range of voices, with an acknowledgement of where the voices sit within the communities.

6.3 Implications

The relationship between worldviews community knowledge, the academic community and the RE community reflects the different constituencies they serve. Bearing this in mind, along with the history, tradition and modern expressions of different worldviews in England and Wales, this draft Handbook proposes that the priority of content selection and curriculum construction must be around the NSE.

The draft Handbook recognises the need for a partnership between the school subject communities and the faith/worldview communities, not least for the accurate and fair presentation of variety within traditions. However, communities' aspirations for representation, even advocacy, must be in the service of the curriculum subject, rather than the curriculum serving the communities^[12].

6.4 Schools with a religious character

The NSE offers a benchmark for a high-quality education in religion and worldviews. The REC project offers this to those responsible for RE in schools with a religious character, to guide on the teaching of religion and worldviews. It does not prevent such schools from teaching their own worldview traditions in other ways, in addition to this approach.



Selecting content

It is vital that syllabus writers and curriculum developers make wise decisions on the selection of knowledge for a curriculum. Time for RE is limited, and the worldviews approach is intended to avoid a proliferation of content, not least because of the impossibility of comprehensive coverage of the diversity of religious and non-religious traditions. The criteria for deciding content include the following:

1. The NSE must frame the intent behind the content selection. The treatment of that content then contributes to the progression of understanding of the elements in the NSE, and the links between them.
2. The legal requirement operates, which is that RE 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act 1996 Section 375).
3. Good practice in RE, as well as European and domestic legislation, has established the principle that RE in schools without a religious character should be inclusive of both religious and non-religious worldviews. Schools should ensure that the content and delivery of the RE curriculum are inclusive in this respect (noting that this does not imply equal time between religious and non-religious worldviews).
4. Local context is important, including school character, local community character, pupil knowledge and experience, teacher knowledge and experience. Local context also includes the history of local areas, allowing opportunities for local studies that connect teaching and learning with the geographical and historical background.
5. Pupils need to gain 'collectively enough' or 'cumulatively sufficient' knowledge (OFSTED 2021), not total coverage. In this Handbook, 'collectively enough' needs to relate to the NSE, with its three broad strands of *content*, *engagement* and *position*.
6. All religious and non-religious worldviews studied must have fair and accurate representation.
7. Schools should be able to give a clear account of their curriculum choices and carefully consider how they will enable the construction of a coherent curriculum for pupils.

7.1 Implications of this model

A wide range of content could be selected to enable pupils to understand religion and worldviews in the way set out in the NSE. The move to a religion and worldviews curriculum gives great flexibility and freedom in this regard.

The selection of content is no longer driven by the 'world religions paradigm'. The world religions are 'social facts', and the Education Act still requires that RE 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. However, an education in religion and worldviews includes these traditions as well as developing pupils' awareness of the causes and functions of that paradigm and its effects. This is part of the self-awareness of the approach – it examines the assumptions and perspectives at play.

7.2 Principles for selection

The above criteria offer some guidance to shape and limit the extent of the

curriculum. Alongside that we might add 'fewer things in greater depth' as a principle. A current research project at the University of Strathclyde^[19] is looking at some principles for 'pedagogical reduction', so that syllabus writers and curriculum developers can choose content wisely, in ways that illuminate and expand pupils' understanding of religion and worldviews. As that project bears fruit in the next two years, this Handbook and framework project will look to draw on its insights for the development of the example frameworks. (See sections 15 and 16 below for more on content selection.)

7.3 Curriculum planning

Content selection for a syllabus or curriculum needs to provide pupils with the foundations for learning about religion and worldviews through their schooling. Current good practice emphasises the critical focus on how early learning prepares for later learning, to create a coherent narrative across the curriculum.



Purposes for RE in a religion and worldviews approach

The key purpose for RE in a religion and worldviews approach is for pupils to understand how worldviews work in human experience, including their own, through the study of religion and belief.

This incorporates several other purposes for the subject, drawn from the rich traditions of RE and the wider purposes of education. This education in religion and worldviews will help pupils to examine:

- diverse understandings of the world presented by worldviews (religious and non-religious)
- relationships between beliefs, teachings, forms of expression and lived experience
- questions of meaning, purpose and truth, how these questions may be posed, addressed and understood differently within disciplines and worldviews
- the concepts, language and ways of knowing that help organise and make sense of religion and worldviews
- how their own worldview shapes their encounters with the world, and how their context, experiences and study can shape their worldview.

The worldviews approach seeks context-appropriate expression of the key purpose statement. It is not trying to impose a one-size fits all model but recognises the need for diversity of implementation to fit the varied contexts of schools.

8.1 Purpose statements

A worldviews approach to RE will:

- introduce pupils to the rich diversity of religion and non-religion, locally and globally, as a key part of understanding how the world works and what it means to be human
- stimulate pupils' curiosity about, and interest in, this diversity of worldviews, both religious and non-religious
- expand upon how worldviews work, and how different worldviews, religious and non-religious, influence individuals, communities and society
- develop pupils' awareness that learning about worldviews involves interpreting the significance and meaning of information they study
- develop pupils' appreciation of the complexity of worldviews, and sensitivity to the problems of religious language and experience
- induct pupils into the processes and methods by which we can study religion, religions and worldviews
- enable pupils, by the end of their studies, to identify positions and presuppositions of different academic disciplines and their implications for understanding
- give pupils opportunities to explore the relationship between religious worldviews and literature, culture and the arts
- include pupils in the enterprise of interrogating the sources of their own developing worldviews and how they may benefit from exploring the rich and complex heritage of humanity
- provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the relationship between their personal worldviews and the content studied, equipping them to develop their own informed responses in the light of their learning.

9

Revised National Statement of Entitlement

The national statement of entitlement (NSE) indicates that children and young people in schools, whatever their context, are entitled to an education in religion and worldviews that:

- reflects the changing religious and secular diversity of the UK and the world
- is inclusive of, and relevant to, children and young people, whose worldviews may range across the secular and/or religious
- approaches the subject from the perspective of worldviews (incorporating religious and non-religious worldviews, personal and communal, individual and organised, plural and diverse) to help pupils navigate the diverse, complex world around them, in relation to religion and belief

The place for this education in religion and worldviews is the subject currently called Religious Education in legislation in England and Religion, Values and Ethics in Wales.



NOTE that wherever the NSE refers to worldviews, it means religious and non-religious worldviews.

Key:
Content
Engagement
Position

To meet this entitlement, pupils must be taught to understand the nature of worldviews, in relation to religion and belief, including:

CONTENT	
Core statements	Expanded statements
a. Nature/formation/expression What is meant by worldview and how people's worldviews are formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences and experiences	The nature and variety of worldviews, and how people's worldviews are formed through a complex mix of influences and experiences, including (for example) rituals, practices, texts, teachings, stories, inspiring individuals, the creative arts, family, tradition, culture, and everyday experiences and actions. How these may also act as ways of expressing and communicating worldviews.
b. Organised/individual How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews	How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews (e.g. how individual worldviews may be consciously held or tacit; how individual and organised worldviews are dynamic; how individual worldviews may overlap to a greater or lesser extent with organised worldviews)
c. Contexts How worldviews have contexts, reflecting time and place, are highly diverse, and feature continuity and change.	How worldviews have contexts, reflecting their time and place, shaping and being shaped by these, maintaining continuity and also changing; how they are highly diverse and often develop in interaction with each other. (This applies to organised worldviews as well as to individual worldviews.)
d. Meaning and purpose How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience	How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience, such as questions of existence, meaning, purpose, knowledge, truth, identity and diversity. How worldviews may play different roles in providing people with ways of making sense of existence and/or their lives, including space for mystery, ambiguity and paradox.
e. Values, commitments and morality How worldviews may provide guidance on how to live a good life	How worldviews may provide a vision of, and guidance on, how to be a good person and live a good life, and may offer ideas of justice, right and wrong, value, beauty, truth and goodness. How individuals and communities may express their values through their commitments.
f. Influence and power How worldviews influence, and are influenced by, people and societies	How worldviews influence people (e.g. providing a 'grand narrative' or story for understanding the world) and influence the exercise of power in societies (e.g. on social norms for communities, or in relation to conflict or peace-making). How society and people can also influence and shape worldviews.

ENGAGEMENT	
Core statements	Expanded statements
g. Ways of knowing The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing.	The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing. Questions and methods should be carefully chosen, recognising that there are different understandings of what knowledge is deemed reliable, valid, credible, truthful etc.
h. Lived experience The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people.	The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people (e.g. religious, non-religious, embodied, diverse, fluid, material, experiential) in relation to local and global contexts, recognising the complex reality of worldviews as they are held, shared and expressed by people in real life.
i. Dialogue/interpretation The field of study of worldviews is to be shown as a dynamic area of debate.	The field of study of worldviews is to be encountered as a dynamic area of dialogue and debate, and one which engages with practices of interpretation and judgement within and between religious and non-religious communities.

POSITION	
Core statements	Expanded statements
j. Personal worldviews: reflexivity Pupils will reflect on and potentially develop their personal worldviews in the light of their study.	Pupils will come to understand their own worldview in greater depth, and how it relates to the worldviews of others, becoming more reflective and reflexive. As they develop this awareness of their positionality in relation to that of others, they will make informed judgements on how (far) this understanding prepares them for life in a diverse world
k. Personal worldviews: impact Pupils will reflect on how their worldviews affect their learning	Pupils will develop their understanding of how their encounters with the subject content of RE are affected and shaped by their worldviews, whether conscious or not, and that this is also true for everyone else. They will reflect on how (far) their learning may have an impact on their worldview.

All pupils are entitled to receive an education in religion and worldviews in every year up to, and including, year 11. Post-16 students, including those in Further Education, should have the opportunity to study religion and worldviews during their post-16 course of study.

Teaching must promote openness, respect for others, objectivity, scholarly accuracy and critical enquiry.

In line with the DfE Teachers' Standards, pupils are therefore entitled to be taught by teachers who:

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant curriculum area
- foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject
- can address misconceptions and misunderstandings and handle controversial issues
- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the study of religion and worldviews
- promote the value of scholarship

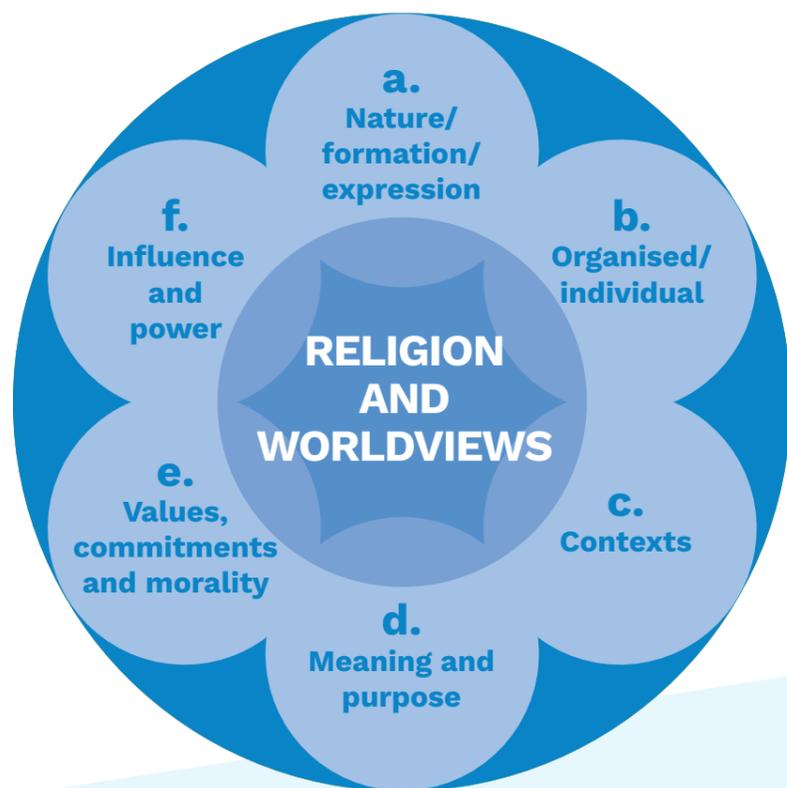
For all pupils to have equal access to high quality education in religion and worldviews, the subject must be given adequate time and resources commensurate with the place of the subject (RE) as a core component of the curriculum.

Schools are required to publish information about their RE curriculum on their website. Schools should include a detailed statement about how they meet the NSE and ensure that every pupil has access to it through the curriculum, lessons and wider experiences they provide.

This national statement of entitlement provides a shared vision for the subject that will be interpreted for, and applied in, a variety of different contexts by syllabus writers and curriculum designers.

Thinking it through

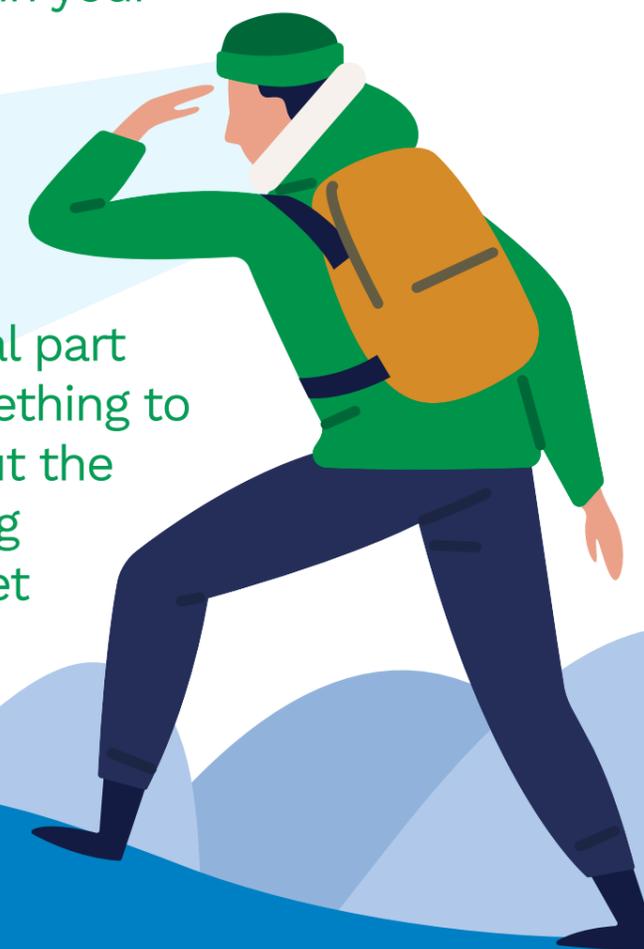
The NSE presents a realm of religion and worldviews to explore (content strand, NSE a-f).



As with any exploration, you need to prepare; you need to choose the right tools for the job and a suitable route (engagement strand, NSE g-i).



But your exploration is always going to be undertaken from your own perspective – i.e., from within your own worldview (perspective strand, NSE j-k). Awareness of how this affects your exploration, and how your journey affects your own worldview, is an integral part of the exploration, and something to draw attention to throughout the journey – not just something to reflect upon when you get back home.



NOTE that wherever the NSE refers to worldviews, it means religious and non-religious worldviews.

10

Developing pupils' personal worldviews

The development of pupils' personal worldviews is integral to an academic worldviews approach.

It involves:

- enabling pupils to reflect on and articulate their worldviews and the sources of these, so that they can engage in well-informed dialogue in relation to religion and worldviews (while recognising they might also do this in relation to English literature, geography, science or PE, for example)
- drawing pupils' attention to their worldviews and bringing them into well-informed dialogue with the worldviews of others
- developing their reflexivity – their reflection on and self-awareness about the learning process
- using this reflexivity to understand and explain how their personal worldviews both affect their encounter and engagement with the content of religion and worldviews, and also how these encounters may influence their worldviews
- recognising and reflecting on how other people are also influenced by their personal worldviews in how they respond to religion and worldviews
- developing their understanding of the role of interpretation in their own knowledge growth.

Developing pupils' personal worldviews may include the following:

- the ability to apply disciplinary, dialogical and hermeneutical skills
- the acquisition and creation of personal knowledge, arising through the interpretative action of engaging with the content of religion and worldviews
- the development of academic virtues, such as curiosity, intellectual humility, willingness to learn from others, and careful listening before coming to judgement.

Note that the subject will provide experiences, opportunities and encounters with diverse people and content exemplifying something of the richness of worldviews, wisdom, lived religion/nonreligion, artistic expression, human creativity and ingenuity, culture, philosophy, ethics, etc.

The encounter with the rich diversity of human experience gives pupils space and tools for reflecting on their own worldviews, and to recognise how their worldview affects their interpretation of, and engagement with, the world. Pupils can reflect on how this applies to everyone else too, and what that might mean for listening to, and living with, others.

Not all effects and impacts of this on pupils can be known or examined, and for some school contexts (such as those with a religious foundation) syllabus writers may look to identify aspects of moral and spiritual development more closely.

10.1 How to develop pupils' personal worldviews

It is important to note that the *position* strand of the NSE (statements j-k) indicates that pupils are always encountering the content and processes of the subject from the position of their own worldview. This means that developing personal worldviews is not simply a matter of getting to the end of a unit of work and reflecting on their own ideas (see illustration on p. 21). Instead, pupils should have their attention drawn to their position in relation to their studies at different times within a unit of work. There is not a set requirement for this – and it should not become a tick-boxing exercise. Depending on the content, it might be appropriate to reflect on pupils' worldviews at the beginning, middle and end of a unit, asking pupils whether and/or how their ideas are changing or have changed.

Strategies for this include:



FREE-LISTING ^[14]

This is an ethnographic method that collects data that shows salience of terms; for example, asking pupils or interviewees to list the first words that come to mind when they think about the term 'religion' or 'non-religion' or 'God' or 'truth'; then gathering the lists and analysing for salience – that is, for rank and frequency. This can indicate personal worldview perspectives before studying religion, non-religion, God, truth etc.



MIXING DESK ANALOGY ^[15]

This involves drawing up a diagram showing that elements of a person's worldview will have different relevance or importance in different contexts, such as when facing challenges, or at different times in life; see p. 37 for an example of a mixing desk applied to planning.



SNOWFLAKE ^[16]

This is a diagram that allows pupils to respond to different statements, according to how far they agree or disagree; this visual presentation allows them to see immediately where they agree or disagree with another pupil's responses. Pupils discuss similarities and differences and present their reasons for their responses, applying their learning. The statements can indicate aspects of a pupil's worldview and be revisited at different stages of a unit or units of work to note any changes and continuities.



EXPRESSING IDEAS

Pupils might be asked to respond to stimulus material in different ways, expressing ideas through art, poetry, reflective writing, or even through taking action. These can indicate the nature and impact of pupils' personal worldview, with opportunities to revisit and reflect at different points later in the unit of work or a subsequent one.

One research project on metacognition and worldviews from Exeter University has developed a Worldview Question Framework (see Larkin et al^[17]). This works as a place for personal reflection for pupils on their own worldview. Pupils respond to a variety of questions on themes including personal identity, ultimate and existential questions, ontological and epistemological questions (i.e. about the nature of existence and of knowledge). Pupils respond to questions in the light of their learning, and reflect on how their answers might change as they learn more. The research project highlights opportunities for development of this approach.



11

Making good progress: models

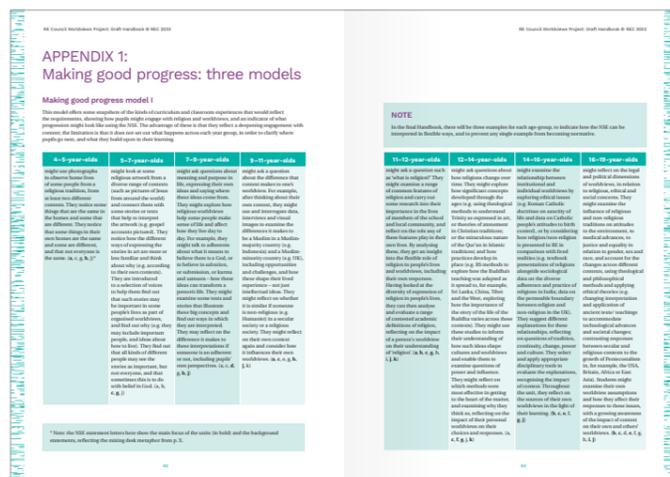
The NSE is intended to set a direction and a benchmark for an education in religion and worldviews, although there is no single correct way to deliver it. Appendix 1 offers three possible models, based on the NSE, for the framework development teams to consider and test.

There are a number of ways in which people understand what progression means.

- Pupils might make progress in terms of knowing more and remembering more. The precise knowledge pupils understand, handle and recall will depend on the context, and the NSE offers a set of criteria for selection, to be applied by a syllabus and a curriculum. It is not a simple case of setting out a range of generic stages of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Progress might be shown in terms of how pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills extend, for example, from simple to more complex understanding, from local to global contexts, encountering increasing contestation and controversy, and/or making richer links between elements. The precise content selection will depend upon the syllabus and/or curriculum context.

- There is current interest in the idea of the curriculum itself as the progression model, whereby the curriculum models the progression, and pupils make progress insofar as they can understand and do what the curriculum sets out. Progress is not to a set of external criteria against which the pupils are measured. Instead, the curriculum has been written in such a way as to embody the pupil progress intended, based on the NSE. (Note that, the idea of the curriculum as a progression model could be a 'knowing more and remembering more' model as the curriculum sets out a series of knowledge building blocks. Progression will be achieved when the building blocks are known, recalled and understood.)

The examples in Appendix 1 (see pp. 42–45) offer some possible progression models that might be developed for the different frameworks initially, and syllabuses eventually. What is lacking in these examples is the kind of detail of subject content around which progression needs to be built. The frameworks, with their particular contexts, will identify content in ways that generic examples cannot.



12

Fulfilling the National Statement of Entitlement

12.1 The Law

The Law in England states that RE must be provided for all registered pupils in each school year in maintained schools and academies, including those in Reception classes and sixth forms, unless withdrawn by their parents, or, in the case of students over 18, by themselvesⁱⁱ.

The Law in Wales states that RVE (Religion, Values and Ethics) must be provided for all registered pupils in each school year in maintained schools and academies, including those in Reception classes. RVE post-16 is no longer mandatory (although Section 61 of the Act does not prevent a school from imposing a requirement that all learners in its sixth form undertake compulsory RVE classes). There is no right of withdrawal from RVE in Walesⁱⁱⁱ.

12.2 National guidance

The NSE sets out an entitlement for all pupils for RE in terms of an education in religion and worldviews.

This NSE aims to establish a shared vision for the subject of RE, revitalised through a worldviews approach. It is intended to guide and assist those of us responsible for developing syllabuses and curricula for RE.

Teaching must promote openness, respect for others, objectivity, scholarly accuracy and critical enquiry.

In line with the DfE Teachers' Standards, pupils are therefore entitled to be taught by teachers who:

- have a secure knowledge of the relevant curriculum area
- foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject
- can address misconceptions and misunderstandings and handle controversial issues

- demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the study of religion and worldviews
- promote the value of scholarship.

For all pupils to have equal access to high quality education in religion and worldviews, the subject must be given adequate time and resources commensurate with the place of the subject (RE) as a core component of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.

12.3 Good practice

The Handbook recommends that schools publish a detailed statement about how they meet the NSE and ensure that every pupil has access to it through the curriculum, lessons and wider experiences schools provide.

Schools should be clear about the level of subject knowledge and expertise required for teaching this subject and establish the level of subject expertise present among their teachers. All teachers need CPD to develop their thinking and practice. Recognising that primary initial teacher education, for example, routinely gives three hours or less of training on RE, and that much secondary RE is taught by teachers with other specialisms, underlines the imperative need for schools to have a systematic plan to enable teachers to engage in sufficient, expert led CPD. Those who are not sufficiently qualified need urgent support with extending subject and pedagogical knowledge and understanding.

Schools are required to publish information about their RE curriculum on their school website. Schools should include a detailed statement about how they meet the NSE and ensure that every pupil has access to it through the curriculum, lessons and wider experiences they provide.

ⁱⁱEducation Act 2002, sections 78 to 79; Education Act 2002, section 1A.

ⁱⁱⁱ<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/summary-of-legislation/#religion,-values-and-ethics>

13

Connecting the NSE with current practice

The NSE sets out a worldviews approach to the selection of content and of teaching and learning approaches. There are resonances between this approach and current models of RE. For example:

13.1 OFSTED

In England, the OFSTED religious education research review (2021^[18]) sets out three types of knowledge:

- ‘substantive’ knowledge: knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions
- ‘ways of knowing’: pupils learn ‘how to know’ about religion and non-religion
- ‘personal knowledge’: pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study

The NSE approach reflects these three dimensions:

- Statements a-f (Content) fit with the category of substantive knowledge
- Statements g-i (Engagement) fit with the category of ways of knowing
- Statements j-k (Position) fits with the category of personal knowledge.

(Note that key to the NSE is how its three elements intertwine. It is not a list but a process of engagement between the pupil and the world via the subject content.)

13.2 Freathy et al, Exeter

The RE-researcher’s model (2015) similarly sets out three elements of RE:

- Representation: the object of study; what is to be known about religion(s) and worldview(s)
- Research: learning about and applying methods and interpretations
- Reflect: the learner evaluates their own worldviews, in the context of the study of religion(s) and worldview(s)

As with the OFSTED model above, the NSE statements connect with these elements.

The work at Exeter University has included involvement in the ‘Big Ideas’ project (see section 13.4 below), as well as expanding on the RE-searchers model as applied to worldviews, big ideas *in* and *about* religion(s) and worldview(s), and metacognition.^[19] There are strong resonances with the worldviews approach in this draft Handbook.

13.3 Big Questions in Classrooms

A research project on multidisciplinary approaches in religious education was undertaken by RE Today Services (2019-2022) as part of the Templeton World Charity Foundation *Big Questions in Classrooms* programme.

In their research project, *Challenging Knowledge in Religious Education*^[20], RE Today created a series of resources for teachers to introduce and embed disciplinary approaches in upper primary and secondary school RE. They built on the work of Freathy et al, and base their resources on three elements that connect with the NSE:

- Object of study: the substantive content of religion(s)/worldviews; factual, conceptual and theoretical knowledge
- Methods of study: learning about and applying the intellectual tools and methods used to establish that knowledge
- Subject: the learners recognise their worldviews and how these affect their understanding about religion(s)/worldviews

13.4 Big Ideas

The ‘Big Ideas’ approach developed by Barbara Wintersgill and colleagues establishes six ‘big ideas’ as criteria for the selection of content for RE.^[21] It was influential in the direction of the CoRE final report, and that document’s original Statement of Entitlement (2018). The Big Ideas themselves do not include the element of personal worldviews set out in the CoRE report and this draft Handbook, but while statements a-f in the revised NSE in this document are not the same as the Big Ideas, the influence of the Big Ideas project sits behind the NSE.

13.5 Wales

In Wales, the Government guidance for Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) divides it into several, interconnected ‘sub lenses’ through which key concepts can be examined. These sub lenses include:

- Search for meaning and purpose
- The natural world and living things
- Identity and belonging
- Authority and influence
- Relationships and responsibility
- Values and ethics
- The journey of life

Schools are encouraged to take an interdisciplinary approach, and RVE sits within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience. This gives ample opportunities for exploring ways of knowing (NSE statement f). It is important that non-religious philosophical convictions are studied alongside religions. Pupils developing awareness of *Cynefin* is important in RVE. *Cynefin* is a Welsh word that is not directly translatable but often imprecisely translated as ‘habitat’. Broadly it means a sense of connection and belonging, and it encourages exploration of NSE statements a-f, h, j and k.

14

Applying disciplinary methods

The NSE requires that content should be approached in a variety of ways, including applying different ‘ways of knowing’ (cf. OFSTED). This allows for the application of methods, for example those from theology, philosophy and from within the academic study of religion. Such disciplinary areas are valuable in helping pupils to understand how the study of religion and worldviews can be undertaken in different ways.

For younger age groups, drawing on a variety of methods is sufficient, noting with pupils that different methods handle content in different ways and should be evaluated appropriately. The use of methods and disciplines helps pupils to learn how, for example:

- you can ask different questions about the same content
- answering these questions will require different kinds of methods
- the findings might be interpreted appropriately in different ways
- evaluation of the findings will require a set of tools appropriate to the methods and disciplines
- all the above are affected by the context of the learner/researcher and their personal worldview.

As pupils make progress through the school, they should be taught how disciplines construct different types of knowledge. This means that there are particular assumptions behind the various disciplines, and different types of question being addressed within them.

To apply a worldviews approach is not a matter simply of selecting a method; good curriculum planning entails being clear about the type of knowledge that is being constructed within any given module or unit. For example, the theistic assumptions of theology and the naturalistic assumptions of sociology and anthropology affect how scholars practise the discipline, as well as the relationship of the knowledge created in these disciplines to the worldviews of the adherents within traditions.

Within a worldviews approach, pupils should, for example:

- be helped to recognise the different authoritative weight of a ‘sacred’ text for adherents in that tradition, and for those outside the tradition for whom it is not ‘sacred’, and some implications from this
- explore how and why such texts are interpreted and applied differently, looking at a range of perspectives and contexts
- examine how a worldviews approach questions some categories within ‘religion’, such as, for example, how far a focus on texts is appropriate in different traditions
- learn to recognise that a single voice from a tradition will not be representative, and consider whether and how a tradition could be represented
- learn that any adherent’s perspective will indicate a relationship between ‘orthodox’ or mainstream teachings and individual practice; for example, a theologian’s perspective will differ from a sociologist’s and from a layperson’s
- consider whose voices are chosen within lessons, why, and what implications there may be
- have opportunities to test whether, for example, survey data is reliable, such as by investigating the questions asked, the sample size and range, who was asking whom and why, and how the data was presented.

See Making good progress II, Appendix 1, p. 44, for suggested ways of making progress in disciplinary knowledge.

15

How to use the NSE to develop a syllabus

A syllabus construction process requires a philosophy before it requires a checklist process or set of planning steps. The NSE shapes the philosophy, setting out the nature of the engagement between pupils and the content in an education in religion and worldviews.

This section includes some provisional steps for planning, some principles to bear in mind, and a set of questions to be able to answer after planning. Note that the primary purpose of this guidance within the draft Handbook is for the framework development teams. The guidance will be revised in the light of the experience of developing frameworks and published in the final Handbook at the end of the project in 2024.

15.1 Steps for devising your syllabus

- 1 Whether starting a syllabus from scratch, or building on one already in place, **start with the NSE.**
- 2 You might want to put it in the centre of a large piece of paper/interactive whiteboard screen.
- 3 It would be useful to annotate the NSE to show some connections that you see across statements and strands. Note how some statements can be broken down into smaller parts. Note how some might be used to add a dimension to another (e.g. NSE b could add a dimension of comparison between organised and individual worldviews to another statement).
- 4 Your annotations could include examples of content/concepts from religious and non-religious worldviews that you might use to enable pupils to grasp the statements – to understand how worldviews work.
- 5 As you annotate, you might use concentric circles around the NSE – indicating your initial thoughts about how to go deeper into a statement/strand, giving a sense of progression across the age range, and allowing pupils to revisit content. It is important to reflect on local contexts: where do these offer rich opportunities for exploring elements of the NSE?
- 6 Note the gaps – what areas are left out, or are covered in less detail? Might this be because they are not part of your current RE practice, or maybe cover an unfamiliar area of subject knowledge? How might you address those?
- 7 It would be helpful to break down the content component of your annotated overview into segments (four or five, perhaps). These could be vertical segments – showing a way that understanding of an NSE statement or statements might be developed as pupils move up through the school. This is to ensure that earlier learning prepares for later learning, and later learning builds on earlier learning. It is also to create a structure for the syllabus, to enable breadth and balance.
- 8 Some segments may work across all age groups, and some may be more suited to older pupils: consider where these segments might be phased in as pupils move through the school.
- 9 You could devise exemplar questions that could be used for different age groups to unlock the content – or adapt examples from your current syllabus. Note that a worldviews approach will shape questions differently to a world religions approach: don’t just assume questions can transfer straight from one to the other.
- 10 Reflect on the balance of the *engagement* strand statements from the NSE across your questions. How well do your questions indicate the kind of methods (disciplines with older pupils) that are needed to find out suitable answers?
- 11 It is important to draft a key stage outline or long-term plan, populated by your example questions. Check for clarity in terms of how the plan deepens pupils’ engagement with the strands of the NSE, via your chosen segments, balanced across the school year and across age groups.
- 12 You might like to test your syllabus design by choosing a sample of key questions from different phases and drafting some units of work to see how the questions open up the strands of content, engagement and perspectives. Consider a range of case studies that give pupils an insight into the way worldviews work in different contexts.

15.2 Principles to bear in mind when developing a syllabus

Using the NSE

- The NSE maps out the knowledge and understanding of how worldviews work in human life that students need to gain if they are both to know how to study this academic subject and to understand the relationship between religion and worldviews.
- The NSE is intended to function “less as a perimeter that restricts, but ‘an aperture: a space through which the world can be seen’”.^[22]
- The NSE provides a structure and criteria for content selection, to avoid content overload.
- The NSE is not a list, nor is it a checklist. The statements relate to each other, and the boundaries are not fixed.
- The worldviews approach is not about studying a list of religious and non-religious worldviews in separate containers. The focus is on the human experience of interacting with the religious and non-religious domain.
- Syllabuses and schools should not simply assume that they are already doing a religion and worldviews approach as set out in this draft Handbook. Many teachers have been examining diversity and applying different disciplines. However, in a religion and worldviews *curriculum*, the focus is on the development and construction of pupils’ personal knowledge, through facilitating their interaction with the content as set out in the NSE, while seeking to understand the worldviews of others.
- A syllabus should make judgements about the balance between the different elements of the NSE, according to the context. All units need to include something from each of the three elements of the NSE (content, engagement, position), balanced appropriately.
- The NSE statements are not intended to be covered separately by unit/term. The bigger picture needs to emerge across topics and across school phases, so that the curriculum develops for pupils aged 4–19.
- The different statements can be broken down and units can focus on a part. For example, NSE d could be broken down to ask ontological questions about existence or origins, such as:

Is there a God or a higher being, force or power? Is this life it, or is there life after death? What exists and what does not exist? What is real and unreal?

Similarly, a unit could use NSE d and focus on epistemological questions of knowledge and truth, addressing questions such as:

What is true and false? What is fact and fiction? How do you know? What source(s) do you use to decide? What is knowledge? What is belief? What is opinion? What is faith?

Organising syllabus/curriculum content

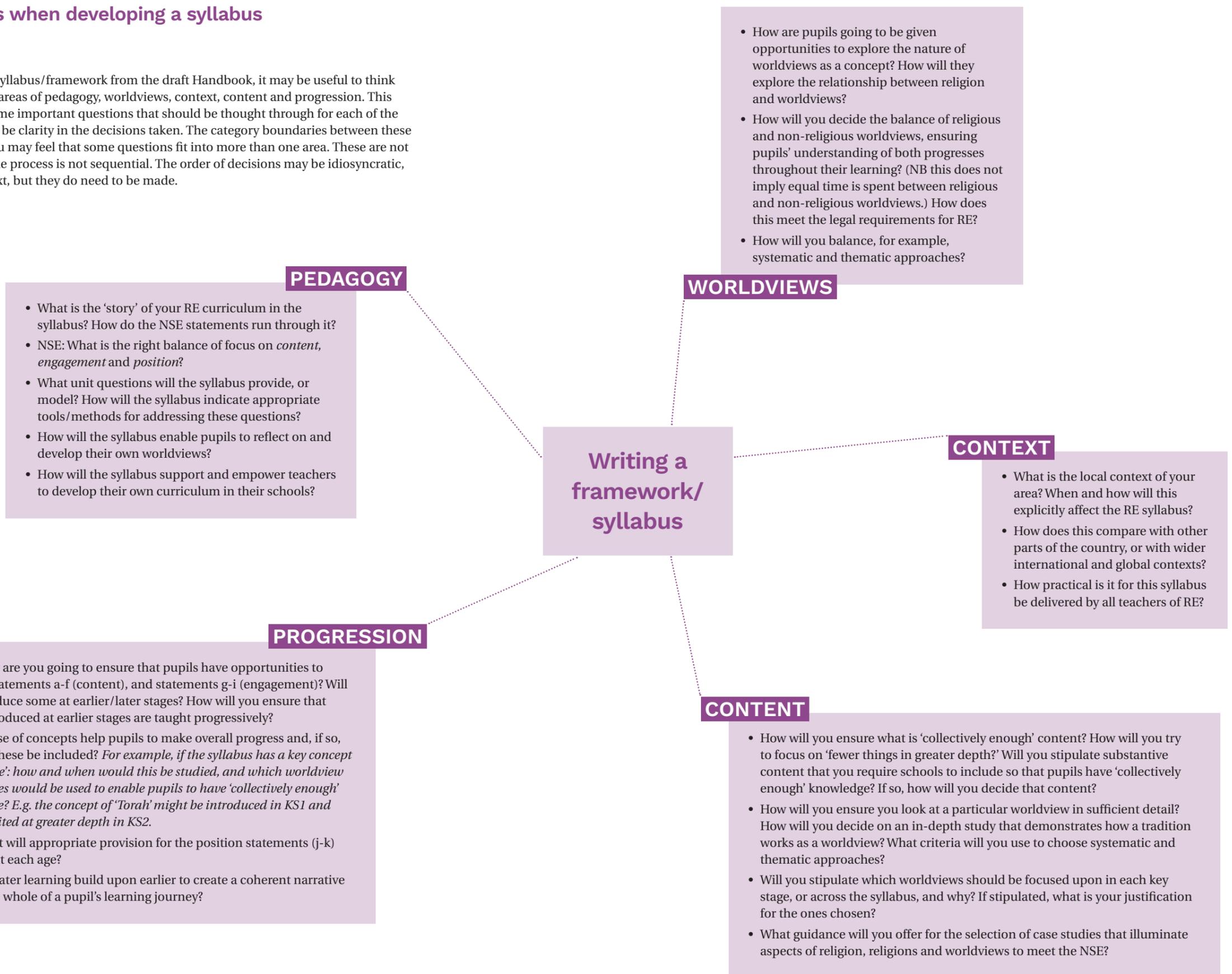
- Systematic study of an organised worldview (a religion, for example) can be undertaken, but constructed in such a way as to illustrate and explore the elements of the NSE.
- Organised worldviews can be examined through case studies, which illuminate the elements of the NSE as well as the worldview itself. Such case studies should ideally be microcosms, where focusing on the particular reveals key characteristics or qualities of the wider worldview.^[23]
- A syllabus should support teachers to select engaging material that is appropriate to the pupils in their own RE classrooms. This should make good use of creative expressions, lived experience and material religion as well as texts and teachings.
- As they make progress in the subject, it is helpful to build pupils’ expertise in a variety of disciplines (NSE g), but it is not necessary to place equal emphasis on each. (See Making good progress model II, Appendix 1, p. 44.)

Questions and contexts

- Enquiry questions are powerful ways to drive the use of the approach. Setting rich questions is one way of addressing the challenge of content overload – the questions can identify a route through the content, and different kinds of questions indicate the best methods and/or disciplines, and appropriate evaluative processes.
- Contexts can influence choices of questions. These might include how a question will contribute to future learning. This might be preparing pupils to be able to welcome some visitors or to go on some visits; or to give them a nuanced awareness of diversity in a particular worldview in preparation for GCSE, along with the critical skills to handle varied questions.
- The local context can help to shape or give a flavour to a syllabus. For example, the diversity of Tower Hamlets, within the wider diversity of London. Compare that with Norfolk and the East of England, where census data identifies Norwich as the most non-religious city, and history indicates East Anglia as a place of occasional rebellion, with notable challengers of the status quo (see, for example, 1075 and 1549 CE). And Cornwall/Kernow, with its Celtic Christian influence, Cornish language (Kernewek) and a local desire for political independence. This means that context is not just about relative size of different religions/worldviews but about the pulse of the local community.
- Comparison with national and global contexts is also important. The largely secular environment of Britain and Western Europe is not typical in global terms.
- Note how the syllabus writer or curriculum developer’s own worldview will influence the choices made. It is important to ensure that you are as aware of your own position as you are expecting your pupils to be! Be reflexive about your choices. You might ask questions such as: Are you developing a curriculum in your own image? Have you overemphasised critical or uncritical perspectives? Are all your questions or case studies from your comfort zone, or are you stretching and challenging your own perspectives? Are there spaces for scholars from within and outside different worldviews? Are your sociologists or theologians or philosophers all white European men? If so, make some changes!
- Note also how a teacher’s worldview will influence their choices, including choice of questions, examples and case studies used, resources selected, use of language in the classroom, and responses to pupils. It is important to raise teachers’ awareness of this as part of training and implementation of the new syllabus/framework.

15.3 Questions to address when developing a syllabus

When developing a syllabus/framework from the draft Handbook, it may be useful to think through the five key areas of pedagogy, worldviews, context, content and progression. This diagram presents some important questions that should be thought through for each of the areas; there needs to be clarity in the decisions taken. The category boundaries between these areas are fluid, so you may feel that some questions fit into more than one area. These are not set out as steps, as the process is not sequential. The order of decisions may be idiosyncratic, depending on context, but they do need to be made.



16

Using the NSE to develop questions and construct units of work

16.1 Developing questions

Enquiry questions are powerful ways to drive the use of the worldviews approach. Setting rich questions can address the challenge of content overload – the questions can identify a route through the content, and different kinds of questions indicate suitable methods and/or disciplines, and appropriate evaluative processes. Such questions will increase in complexity and sophistication as pupils move through the school.

In the grid below are some examples of common questions explored in RE, in world religions paradigm mode. Following these examples are some reflections about the features of these kinds of questions, along with some suggestions for how a question might reflect a worldviews approach.

EYFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens at a wedding or when a baby is born? • What happens at a festival? • What can we learn from stories from different religions?
KS1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are some stories/places sacred? • What festivals are important in Judaism and Islam?
LKS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do different religions teach about God? • What is the sacred text in Islam and how is it used? • What do religious codes say about right and wrong?
UKS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do Christians believe about Jesus? • Why do people go on pilgrimage and what impact does it have? • What are the key beliefs and values of Sikhism and how are these expressed in the Gurdwara?
KS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does Islam/Hinduism teach about life after death? • Is there a God? What and why do people believe? • Are religions sources of peace or causes of conflict?

Note some key features of ‘world religions’ questions:

- the focus tends to be on the communication of information, transmitting a form of settled knowledge (‘textbook’ information)
- they tend to be abstract and context-free, as if there are answers that might apply universally
- the answers may contain diversity, but the implication is that there is a form of correct answer.

A worldviews approach is looking more for questions that:

- include an interpretive element (e.g. how do these people understand and apply this?)
- offer a clear context (e.g. how do these two people/groups respond at an identified time and place, and why?)

- recognise that there are different answers that are valid (e.g. different individuals, groups, or traditions may have different responses, and that these may change across time and place)
- include an evaluative element, recognising that different answers may be acceptable in different contexts.

You might consider how in Maths, pupils learn *how* to answer questions – the emphasis is on the methods used, the working, not just the answer. For example, pupils learn to become more systematic, they choose ever more concise written methods, and they learn reasoning skills to unpick questions. The same applies in a worldviews approach: pupils learn *how* to make judgements in RE – they show the process they go through in order to find some answers, and they choose appropriate methods to evaluate the reliability, validity, truth or credibility of those answers.

Acknowledging that a question cannot do everything, some worldview-approach questions might look like the following, for example:

EYFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do different people welcome a new baby into the world? • How do different people celebrate Christmas/Easter in our community? Around the world? • What stories are important in our school community?
KS1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the story of Rama and Sita special or sacred to Hindus in Britain and India, and what do they learn from it? • How do Jews/ Muslims in our area celebrate Hanukkah/Eid and why are they special times?
LKS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do Muslims/Christians find out about God, and do they all agree what God is like? • What role does the Qur’an play in the lives of at least three Muslims, and why? • What is the ‘golden rule’, where is it from, and how is it put into practice by people from different worldviews?
UKS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why does the life and teaching of Jesus influence the lives of Christians and their communities today? • What is the role and impact of the Gurdwara on the lives of Sikhs and on local communities in our area/Britain? Do Sikhs experience the Gurdwara differently in different cultures?
KS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who believes in life after death, who doesn’t, and what difference does it make? • How have different Christians understood the idea of Jesus as God? How is Jesus viewed in other worldviews? • How have Christians, Muslims and Buddhists played a role in conflict and peace in the 21st Century?

Note that there is some value in the kinds of answers given to the ‘world religion paradigm’ questions set out above. There are mainstream or ‘orthodox’ responses that often represent an organised or institutional worldview’s position, and many people’s individual worldviews align with those mainstream positions. However, a worldviews approach does not stop there; it explores how worldviews work in people’s lives, which may include how individuals’ worldviews relate to the ‘orthodox’ views. As pupils progress through their schooling, they should also have opportunities to explore how and why these views become ‘orthodox’, and the implications in terms of power. For example, there may be an assumption that the literate and theological presentation of a worldview takes precedence over the everyday practice of individuals and communities. This is an assumption to explore in lessons.

Disciplinary questions

Enquiry questions can also indicate the kind of methods or disciplines that might appropriately be used to work out answers.

For example:

What difference does it make if Christians believe that God is holy and loving?

This theological question allows pupils to examine Christian understandings that balance biblical ideas of God as a holy, transcendent, just judge who hates sin, while also being seen as an immanent loving father (or mother). A unit could involve interpreting biblical texts and examining voices from Christian tradition, talking with Christians to find out how far they balance these contrasting views and what impact believing in this kind of God has on their lives, and reflecting on how far pupils’ own worldviews tend towards love and/or justice in how they respond to people.

What is the role and impact of the Gurdwara on the lives of Sikhs and on local communities in your area/Britain?

This question might draw on sociological survey data on how many Gurdwaras there are in Britain, where, when and why they were built, and how Sikhs use and value the Gurdwara; it might examine case studies from specific local or regional Gurdwaras, with interviews with Sikhs and people who live near the Gurdwaras; it might draw on some texts from the Adi Granth as to the early importance of the langar. Pupils draw on the range of data to come up with conclusions in response to the key questions, evaluating the sources and methods as they do so.^[24]

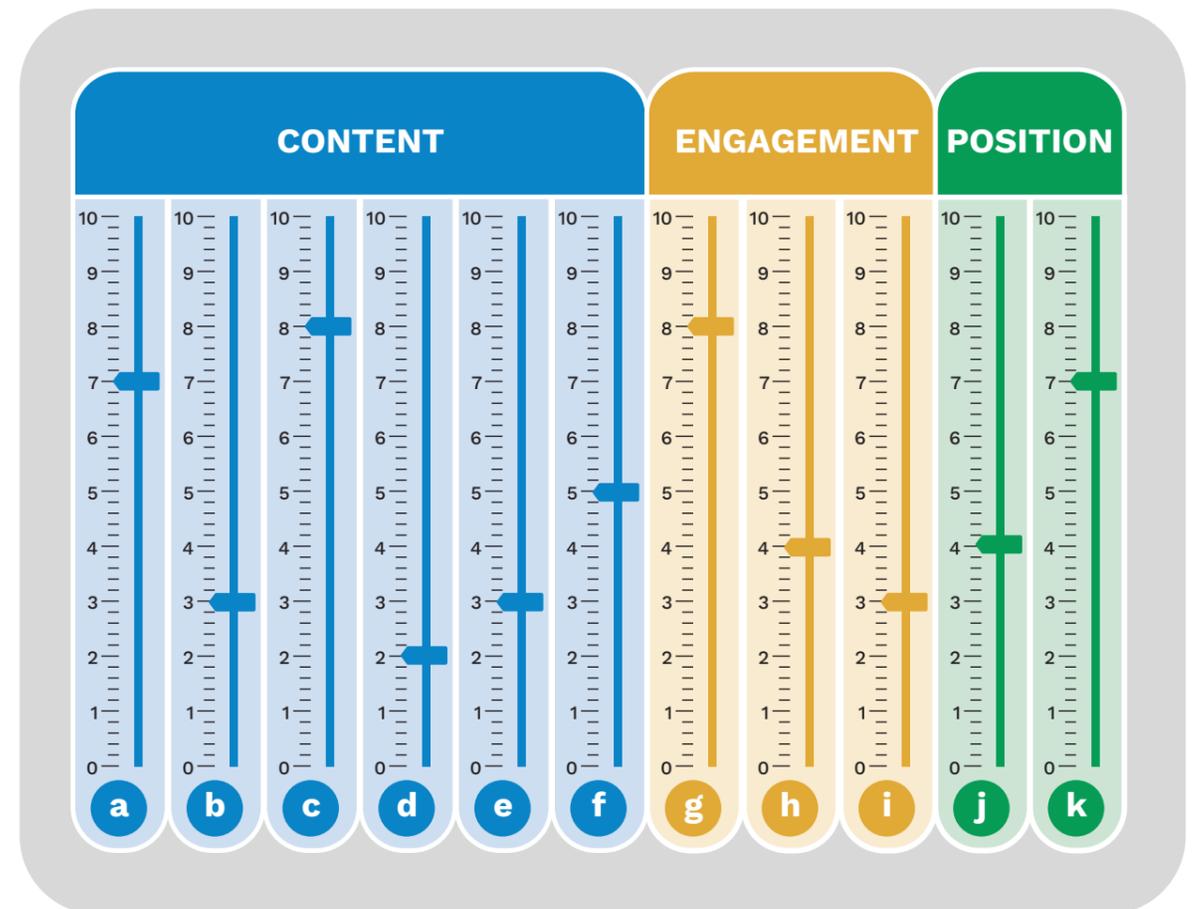
16.2 Using the NSE to shape questions

The NSE offers eleven statements, to be understood as being in relationship with each other. Units of work can focus on a particular *content* statement, alongside one each from the *engagement* and the *position* strands. However, selecting a single statement does not mean that the others are irrelevant. You might consider the metaphor of a mixing desk, below.

In music, a mixing desk takes all the inputs from a band or orchestra and balances them, fading up a particular instrumental or vocal line (or lines) so that it comes to the fore in the mix. While this happens, it does not mean that the other inputs stop – they continue, and their turn in the spotlight comes at other points.

The NSE functions in a similar way. A unit might draw attention to a particular NSE content statement, or it might fade up two or more. For example, a unit might raise a question of meaning and purpose (NSE d) and examine how this is addressed differently in mainstream doctrines and in individual ways of thinking and living (NSE b). The unit may also use examples that show different contexts (NSE c), and while teachers may point this out – and pupils may spot it too – it is not the particular focus of the unit.

Likewise with the engagement strand: emphasis may be placed on a disciplinary approach (NSE g) while also using examples from lived experience (NSE h); this element is noted but plays in the background.



16.3 Constructing units of work

Below is a sample process that might be used to shape a unit using the worldviews approach.

Steps/components	Example 1: KS1	Example 2: upper KS2	Example 3: KS3
Age range: look at what pupils already know, and where you want them to go next	Pupils have encountered the idea that many religious adherents express their worldview through prayer and ritual (NSE a); this unit focuses on Muslims. They will later explore the relationship between individual and organised Muslim worldviews (NSE b)	Pupils have explored how a Christian worldview may be influenced by seeing a 'big story' of God's involvement with humanity (NSE f); this unit reflects on what that might mean in specific examples. They will later explore NSE c in other contexts, e.g. Christian majority/ minority countries.	Y7-8. Pupils have examined some features of religion and their influence in people's lives. They are going on to explore the relationship between religion, spirituality and secularity in the UK and India.
Choose the particular focus from the NSE, balancing the three elements appropriately (content; engagement; position)	<p>NSE a: nature</p> <p>NSE h: lived experience</p> <p>NSE k: personal worldviews: impact</p> <p><i>Note:</i> these are the key statements for the unit, but NSE c (how mosques do not all look the same) and NSE d (how mosques indicate the idea of submission to God) are also part of this unit.</p>	<p>NSE c: contexts (focus on change and continuity)</p> <p>NSE h: lived experience</p> <p>NSE j: personal worldviews: reflexivity</p> <p><i>Note:</i> these are the key statements for the unit, but NSE a (how ritual may shape and express worldviews) and NSE g (using a historical lens) are also part of this unit.</p>	<p>NSE a: nature</p> <p>NSE i: dialogue/interpretation</p> <p>NSE j: personal worldviews: reflexivity</p> <p><i>Note:</i> NSE b (organised/individual) and NSE c (contexts) are also part of this unit.</p>
Identify an appropriate topic from the syllabus	The mosque for Muslims	Christian pilgrimage: Walsingham as England's Nazareth	The nature of religion and worldviews
Design a question to examine the topic and open up the NSE focus	How is a local mosque important for some Muslims? Why?	Why might Christians have made pilgrimage to Walsingham in Medieval times and why might they make a pilgrimage today?	In what ways might a worldview be religious and/or non-religious?
Choose the best method(s) or discipline to answer the question	Methods: use photographs of a variety of mosques; visiting a mosque; talking with some Muslims at the mosque and in the classroom.	Discipline: history Method: sources and interviews	Discipline: religious studies Methods: data from surveys and interviews; analysis of definitions of religion and their applicability and interpretation in varied countries/cultures.
Identify moments for bringing pupils' personal worldviews into focus, to examine the interaction with the content, its impact on pupils' worldviews and the impact of pupils' worldviews on their study.	Impact of pupils' worldview explored through looking at their expectations before the visit. Talking about what they think will be important about the mosque, and then comparing their ideas after the visit and their conversations.	Reflexivity explored through reflections on testimonies. How do Medieval and contemporary voices affect/challenge their personal worldviews? How do pupils' own worldviews affect how they encounter these voices?	Reflexivity explored through pupils' accounts of the sources and influences on their personal worldviews. How clear/blurred are the lines between religious and non-religious worldviews in data, in studies and in their own lives?
Identify sources, examples, case studies and learning activities	Identify sources, examples, case studies and learning activities ^[25]	Identify sources, examples, case studies and learning activities ^[26]	Identify sources, examples, case studies and learning activities ^[27]

17

To what extent is this new?

The worldviews approach is not entirely new. It emerges from within the rich history of religious education in the UK. These brief references to the work of some of RE's greatest recent scholars are simply designed to remind readers that the current turn to an education in religion and worldviews has its roots in the intellectual traditions of the subject.

From the **interpretive RE approach** of Robert Jackson, for example, it draws on the idea of ethnography and lived experience, identifying contextual individual and communal worldviews within wider organised/institutional worldviews, and the importance of interpretation for all learners – adherents in understanding their own tradition(s) and for outsiders looking into the tradition. The skills of attentive listening to other voices, dialogue and reflexivity in responding to the worldviews encountered are vital for the success of worldviews approaches in education.

From the **human development RE model** of Michael Grimmitt, for example, it emphasises the importance of the interaction between the 'life-worlds' of the pupil and the 'life-worlds' of the religious (or non-religious) adherent. The worldviews approach recognises the power and significance of learners identifying their own positionality in relation to the worldviews they study. A worldviews approach accepts and embraces the idea that 'everyone stands somewhere' and pupils' studies of worldviews will be deepened where they are able to learn from the worldviews they encounter.

From the **critical realist RE model** of Andrew Wright, for example, worldviews approaches connect to the emphasis on the importance of a clear understanding of the epistemic assumptions of worldviews and of learners. The critical realist emphasis on truth-seeking and on philosophical considerations about the nature of truth, knowledge, belief and evidence, draw attention to the ways in which different worldviews claim to describe the reality of the human condition. Members of different communities (including religions) may see their worldview as a shared vision of the truth about humanity.

18

How does this approach relate to GCSE?

While numbers of GCSE candidates in England for both full and short courses have declined, this qualification remains the major defined vision for a 14-16 RS / RE curriculum: nearly 300,000 candidates, around half the cohort of 16-year-olds, take these courses. In devising a syllabus, it is important to consider how far these qualifications accommodate the fresh directions of religion and worldviews, and where they may need change or possible radical development.

Current GCSE Religious Studies specifications, which date from first examinations in 2016, allow for diversity: students study two different religions and learn extensively about the internal diversities of the religions on the syllabus (e.g. a Catholic Christianity paper states: "Catholic Christianity should be studied in the context of Christianity as a whole, and common and divergent views within Catholic Christianity").

It is clear, however, that there is still a central, if not fundamental, difference in approach between the current exam specifications, which work from a world religions paradigm, and the worldviews approach set out in this draft Handbook. However, if pupils have had an education in religion and worldviews up to age 14, they would be able to examine critically the particular, contextual presentation of religion(s) within the specification and offer richly nuanced responses to questions.

It has been the practice of the Department for Education (DfE) and, under its influence, the Examination Awarding Bodies, to use contemporary academic and professional thinking in setting the specifications for RS qualifications. For example, the 2013 REC's National Curriculum Framework for the subject, which followed the National Curriculum orders for other subjects, was central in determining the Assessment Objectives in the current GCSE specifications. These specifications emphasise the acquisition of a rich knowledge of two religions, and the processes of critical thinking. Candidates learn about the internal diversity of religions, and develop reasoned responses from their own perspectives to evaluation questions.

In the light of this, it seems wise for religion and worldviews syllabus writing to balance its alertness to current structures and requirements with ambitious attention to future possibilities of a 14-16 religion and worldviews curriculum which uses the NSE as its starting point.

APPENDIX 1: Making good progress: three models

Making good progress model I

This model offers some snapshots of the kinds of curriculum and classroom experiences that would reflect the requirements, showing how pupils might engage with religion and worldviews, and an indicator of what progression might look like using the NSE. The advantage of these is that they reflect a deepening engagement with content; the limitation is that it does not set out what happens across each year group, in order to clarify where pupils go next, and what they build upon in their learning.

4–5-year-olds	5–7-year-olds	7–9-year-olds	9–11-year-olds
might use photographs to observe home lives of some people from a religious tradition, from at least two different contexts. They notice some things that are the same in the homes and some that are different. They notice that some things in their own homes are the same and some are different, and that not everyone is the same. (a, c, g, h, j)*	might look at some religious artwork from a diverse range of contexts (such as pictures of Jesus from around the world) and connect them with some stories or texts that help to interpret the artwork (e.g. gospel accounts pictured). They notice how the different ways of expressing the stories in art are more or less familiar and think about why (e.g. according to their own contexts). They are introduced to a selection of voices to help them find out that such stories may be important in some people's lives as part of organised worldviews, and find out why (e.g. they may include important people, and ideas about how to live). They find out that all kinds of different people may see the stories as important, but not everyone, and that sometimes this is to do with belief in God. (a, b, c, g, j)	might ask questions about meaning and purpose in life, expressing their own ideas and saying where these ideas come from. They might explore how religious worldviews help some people make sense of life and affect how they live day to day. For example, they might talk to adherents about what it means to believe there is a God, or to believe in salvation, or submission, or karma and samsara – how these ideas can transform a person's life. They might examine some texts and stories that illustrate these big concepts and find out ways in which they are interpreted. They may reflect on the difference it makes to someone is an adherent or not, including pupils' own perspectives. (a, c, d, g, h, j)	might ask a question about the difference that context makes to one's worldview. For example, after thinking about their own context, they might use and interrogate data, interviews and visual images to examine the differences it makes to be a Muslim in a Muslim-majority country (e.g. Indonesia) and a Muslim-minority country (e.g. UK), including opportunities and challenges, and how these shape their lived experience – not just intellectual ideas. They might reflect on whether it is similar if someone is non-religious (e.g. Humanist) in a secular society or a religious society. They might reflect on their own context again and consider how it influences their own worldviews. (a, c, e, g, h, j, k)

* Note: the NSE statement letters here show the main focus of the units (in bold) and the background statements, reflecting the mixing desk metaphor from p. X.

NOTE

In the final Handbook, there will be three examples for each age-group, to indicate how the NSE can be interpreted in flexible ways, and to prevent any single example from becoming normative.

11–12-year-olds	12–14-year-olds	14–16-year-olds	16–19-year-olds
might ask a question such as 'what is religion?' They might examine a range of common features of religion and carry out some research into their importance in the lives of members of the school and local community, and reflect on the role any of these features play in their own lives. By analysing these, they get an insight into the flexible role of religion in people's lives and worldviews, including their own responses. Having looked at the diversity of expression of religion in people's lives, they can then analyse and evaluate a range of contested academic definitions of religion, reflecting on the impact of a person's worldview on their understanding of 'religion'. (a, b, c, g, h, i, j, k)	might ask questions about how religions change over time. They might explore how significant concepts developed through the ages (e.g. using theological methods to understand Trinity as expressed in art, or theories of atonement in Christian traditions; or the miraculous nature of the Qur'an in Islamic traditions) and how practices develop in place (e.g. RS methods to explore how the Buddha's teaching was adapted as it spread to, for example, Sri Lanka, China, Tibet and the West, exploring how the importance of the story of the life of the Buddha varies across these contexts). They might use these studies to inform their understanding of how such ideas shape cultures and worldviews and enable them to examine questions of power and influence. They might reflect on which methods were most effective in getting to the heart of the matter, and examining why they think so, reflecting on the impact of their personal worldviews on their choices and responses. (a, c, f, g, j, k)	might examine the relationship between institutional and individual worldviews by exploring ethical issues (e.g. Roman Catholic doctrines on sanctity of life and data on Catholic people's attitudes to birth control), or by considering how religion/non-religion is presented in RE in comparison with lived realities (e.g. textbook presentations of religions alongside sociological data on the diverse adherence and practice of religions in India; data on the permeable boundary between religion and non-religion in the UK). They suggest different explanations for these relationships, reflecting on questions of tradition, continuity, change, power and culture. They select and apply appropriate disciplinary tools to evaluate the explanations, recognising the impact of context. Throughout the unit, they reflect on the sources of their own worldviews in the light of their learning. (b, c, e, f, g, j)	might reflect on the legal and political dimensions of worldviews, in relation to religious, ethical and social concerns. They might examine the influence of religious and non-religious traditions on attitudes to the environment, to medical advances, to justice and equality in relation to gender, sex and race, and account for the changes across different contexts, using theological and philosophical methods and applying ethical theories (e.g. changing interpretation and application of ancient texts/ teachings to accommodate technological advances and societal changes; contrasting responses between secular and religious contexts to the growth of Pentecostalism in, for example, the USA, Britain, Africa or East Asia). Students might examine their own worldview assumptions and how they affect their responses to these issues, with a growing awareness of the impact of context on their own and others' worldviews. (b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j)

Making good progress model II

This offers an example of what progress might look like using the NSE. The focus here is on making progress in terms of the process of engagement (NSE statements g-i, how pupils examine and engage with the content – incorporating ‘ways of knowing’). Syllabuses themselves will need to develop their own outcomes, dependent upon the kinds of questions and content they set out.

5-7s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions; find things out using e.g. observation, interviews, interpreting stories and texts, using data and recognising where it comes from; recognise that sometimes people give different answers to questions
7-9s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above, also ask questions and consider the best ways to find answers. Use the methods above with awareness of (for example) organised teachings and individual lived experiences; historical/ contemporary contexts weighing up how sufficient sources are (e.g. one interview or six; one quote or an extended passage; one example or several) recognise that people disagree, and some answers leave space for mystery and wonder
9-11s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above, but also recognising different questions can fit with subject disciplines, including (for example) theology, philosophy, a social science awareness of basic assumptions of these (e.g. ‘insider/ outsider’ perspectives) examine beliefs, teachings, ways of living with a range of methods (e.g. experiment, interview, qualitative and quantitative data) basic evaluative methods (e.g. reliable methods/ sources/ findings; generalisable conclusions; coherence with tradition etc.) recognise that some important questions leave space for mystery and paradox
11-14s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above but also reflecting on different ways that disciplines construct knowledge, aware of assumptions using content from different methods, or applying these appropriately to investigations, examining beliefs, teachings and lived experience (e.g. using hermeneutical approaches to texts; interpreting artistic forms of expression; case study, discourse analysis, experimental method, ethnography, surveys) awareness of the place of dialogue, debate and disagreement in construction of knowledge application of specific evaluative tools awareness of non-western ways of knowing awareness that <i>‘even if all possible scientific questions be answered the problems of life have not been touched at all’</i> (Wittgenstein).
14-19s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above, but also selecting and applying these disciplinary ways of thinking to increasingly challenging issues, both contemporary and in the past <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within religious communities (e.g. how theology responds to changes in prevailing cultures, such as questions around gender and sexuality; the impact of critical realism and non-realism on debates about God in Christianity) between communities (e.g. relationships between atheism, secularism, Humanism, non-religion, and religion; religion in India or China compared with religion in UK) and beyond religious communities (e.g. dialogues and debates about the nature of religion, its place in societies and cultures, its roles in relation to prejudice, equality and justice, in politics, in colonialism and national identities etc.) recognising the roots of such debates and the range of ways of handling them appreciating that many questions remain unresolved, and will themselves reflect different worldviews.

Making good progress model III

The paragraphs below offer descriptions of the kind of learning that an education in religion and worldviews as set out in the NSE might look like at each phase. It is indicative rather than restrictive: it is not intended to limit pupils’ learning only to the examples described within an age range. It is a spiral process, where progress will fluctuate, and will involve building on earlier learning and experiences. It includes an element of creativity and engagement in terms of the teaching and learning strategies that are implemented.

4-5s	Children begin to hear and use the language of religion and worldviews. They experience, through all their senses, ways in which people explore and express meanings using symbols, stories, rituals and in other ways. They take part in enjoyable, creative learning experiences related to religion and worldviews, and begin to think about where and how their lives are similar and different to those they encounter in RE.
5-7s	Children gather a rich knowledge of different worldviews, including religions, and learn that we are all different. They find out lots about the varied ways human communities celebrate, share stories, understand big ideas and think about what is good and bad. They take part in enjoyable, creative, varied and challenging learning experiences related to religion and worldviews, noticing where their own experience overlaps with the worldviews they encounter, and where their worldviews are different.
7-9s	Pupils begin to identify what a worldview is and how it works. They gather, understand and deploy a rich knowledge of a range of different worldviews. Learning about diversity, they recognise that we each have a worldview, shaped by our families, communities and wider society. They find out how some key examples of religious worldviews teach their ideas and express their visions in practice. They take part in creative learning experiences that deepen their understanding of how religions and worldviews are practised in our communities today and how they draw on ideas from the past and from around the world. They begin to identify aspects of their own worldviews and how they relate to the worldviews of others.
9-11s	Pupils begin to understand what worldviews are, that they affect how we experience the world, and that we can study a range of different worldviews using varied methods, such as through sociological enquiry or textual study. Learning more about diversity, they apply ideas about how our own worldviews are shaped by our families, communities and wider society to different examples. To explain what matters in religion, they use a growing rich knowledge of the ways key examples of religious worldviews teach their ideas and express their visions in practice. They are involved (sometimes as planners) in creative learning experiences that deepen their understanding of varied ways in which religions and worldviews are practised in our communities today and how they draw on ideas from the past and from around the world. They recognise some sources of their own worldviews and identify how someone’s worldview affects how they understand and experience the world, in RE as well as in wider life.
11-14s	Pupils apply the insight that all our experiences are affected by our worldview, and use different methods to research and explain different dimensions of the religion and worldviews curriculum, so that they can describe, explain and analyse religious and non-religious ideas and practice. They make skillful and insightful comparisons between a range of different perspectives on big questions about theology, philosophy and society. They learn, by methods of dialogue and listening, to navigate diversity in relation to religion and worldviews with increasing skill. They participate in challenging experiences of debate, dialogue, imagination, encounter and challenge in relation to big ideas and questions, drawing on their own worldviews and reflecting on the worldviews of others to come to informed judgements on contested matters.
14-19s	Students deepen their understanding of the role that worldviews play in how we interpret our encounters in life, and apply this as they continue to expand and deepen their growing rich knowledge of religion and worldviews. They consider, and appropriately deploy and evaluate, a range of disciplinary methods by which religions and worldviews are studied. They apply these different methods to the religions and worldviews they study in increasing depth. They respond to the challenges, dilemmas and controversies raised by religion and worldviews in contemporary society, locally and globally, drawing on their awareness of how worldviews affect and shape their encounter with the content of RE, and how the content shapes their worldviews. They research and evaluate creative insights offered by different communities into the human condition.

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9. See, for example, the work of James Sire (*The Universe Next Door* (IVP 2020)) and Anne Taves ('From religious studies to worldview studies', *Religion*, 50(1), 138 (2020)), offering worldview questions from religious and non-religious perspectives.
10. See, for example, Christine Counsell's blog <https://thedignityofthethingblog.wordpress.com/2018/03/27/in-search-of-senior-curriculum-leadership-introduction-a-dangerous-absence/> and Rosalind Walker on school science knowledge: <https://rosalindwalker.wordpress.com/2018/01/14/the-nature-of-school-science-knowledge/#more-357>
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13. 'After Religious Education' is led by David Lewin, University of Strathclyde <https://pureportal.strath.ac.uk/en/projects/after-religious-education-curricula-principles-for-education-in-r>
14. This is a method used in social science research. I encountered it in the Understanding Unbelief project, and have used it in resources supporting that project (<https://research.kent.ac.uk/understandingunbelief/research/public-engagement-projects/understanding-unbelief-in-the-re-classroom/>); also in resources developed for the Challenging Knowledge in RE research project from RE Today: e.g. *Investigating God* ed. Fiona Moss for primary and *Studying God* for secondary.
15. See also the examples using the mixing desk analogy for pupils' personal worldviews developed in *Investigating Worldviews* (for primary) and *Studying Worldviews* (for secondary), also part of the Challenging Knowledge in RE research project from RE Today.
16. This strategy was originally developed by Sarah Northall, formerly Head of RE at Chipping Norton Secondary School. See it in basic form in *More than 101 great ideas* ed. Rosemary Rivett, and applied to ideas of God using the discipline of psychology in *Investigating God* ed. Fiona Moss for primary and *Studying God* for secondary, all published by RE Today.
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23. See David Lewin, as above.
24. One way of addressing this question, using this approach as outlined, can be seen in *Investigating How We Live*, ed. Fiona Moss, RE Today 2022.
25. For example, *Picturing Islam, Picturing Muslims* (2019) S Pett and L Blaylock, RE Today
26. See Adam Robertson (2022) "A journey to 'England's Nazareth'" in *REtoday*, 39:2, 26-27
27. See, for example, *Studying Religion* (2022) ed. S Pett, RE Today

Acknowledgements

The REC's project "*Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom. Syllabus building: principles, tools and exemplification*", is supported by the Templeton World Charity Foundation.

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Thanks to the many teachers, advisers and academics who have given time and valuable advice during phase 1 of this project.

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This publication was made possible through the support of a grant from Templeton World Charity Foundation, Inc. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Templeton World Charity Foundation, Inc.

The project was also enabled by the Westhill Foundation with a grant supporting the Expert Advisory Group meetings.

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
June 29th 2022
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
Current budget 2022-2023**

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To advise members of SACRE on the current budget position for 2022-2023.

2 Summary

2.1 A breakdown of the current SACRE budget for the financial year 2022-2023.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report.

4 Background

4.1 A budget had been made available to support the work of SACRE during the financial year 2022-23 as approved by the Corporate Director (Children and Lifelong Learning).

4.2 The 2022-2023 budget will continue to be monitored and clarified.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications are indicated in the budget account.

**Contact Officer:
Mary Gale 07816374873**

Budget 2022-2023

The PO for the room booking for £81 has been rolled forward.

We need to commit funds for the Engage project and for the Christianity project.

Approx £4000

Also time to rewrite the Planning and Assessment suggestions to go in the Appendix to the Agreed Syllabus Approx- £1500

GL Account Codes for : Enquiry Group: Curr Budget (v2) v Act + GRNI/GL Account Code Range: EM1100/**** to EM1100/**** / En					
GL Account Code	Description	Current Budget (v Actual + Grni)		Actuals	Variance Bud v(Act +GRNI)
EM110010002	SACRE Teachers Gross	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EM110044038	SACRE QLS Curriculum Advice	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EM110046204	SACRE Conference Fees	0.00	40.00	40.00	(40.00) Attendance
EM110047017	SACRE Grants to third parties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EM110047202	SACRE Subscriptions General	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EM110048342	SACRE Contingency	6,340.00	0.00	0.00	6,340.00
EM110064550	SACRE Tfrs to Oth Accounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		6,340.00	40.00	40.00	6,300.00
	Total Available before commitments				6,300.00
	Less committed amounts:				
	Available				6,300.00

June 29th 2022

SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN and AS PLAN 2022-2023

Staffordshire SACRE								
Chair	Michael Metcalf			Date Range for completion:	June 2021 – September 2022			
Commissioned support adviser	Mary Gale							
Self-evaluation:				Self-evaluation:				
Objective	Activities	Time scale	Led by	Success criteria	Evidence	Evaluation Feb 2022	RAG updated Fe2022	
Page 103	1. New members become familiar with roles and responsibilities	Attendance at 3 annual meeting	July 2021-Summer 2022	Chair and consultant	SACRE members are familiar with roles and responsibilities	Through meetings, knowledge is evidenced of the process	As meeting are convened then new members become familiar with their roles.	Amber ++
	2. SACRE are made aware of current philosophy regarding RE and CW	Update information received at meetings	July 2021-Summer 2022	Chair and consultant	SACRE members are aware of current philosophy regarding RE and CW	Through meetings, knowledge is increased.	This is always an update at each meeting and is ongoing	Amber ++
	3. Review of the Agreed Syllabus -system and processes review	Familiarisation of procedures and processes regarding review. Seek clarification on funding and agreement from SCC to carry out the review.	July 2021	Chair	SACRE members are familiar with procedures and processes regarding review. Funding is identified.	Through meetings, knowledge is evidenced of the process. Budget is monitored	This is underway	G
	4. ASC conference is convened	ASC members confirmed. ASC conference delegates meet and the outcomes minuted x3	July 2021-September 2022-Nov 2022	Chair and consultant	ASC members are identified and attend ASC first conference meeting and next steps identified.	Minutes of ASC.	These are underway and 2 to date have been held	G

Agenda Item 10

	Agreement on next steps eg working party identified			Working party members identified	Feedback from the working party under Agenda item of November 2021 and Feb and June 2022 SACRE meeting		
5. ASC working party meet	Working party meet in virtual environment and become familiar with current AS and its content	October 2021 Feb 2022 May 2022 June 2022	Chair and consultant	Working party re familiarise itself with content of current 2016 AS	Feedback from the working party under Agenda item of November 2021 February 2022 SACRE meeting. Also May 2022 x2 meetings	Feedback is presented at Feb meeting	Green
6. Engagement with stakeholders	Review of opportunities for greater and more effective engagement. Virtual meeting with stakeholders.	Autumn Term 2021- Spring /Summer/Autumn 2022	Chair and consultant	Engagement activities - opinion and debate on current AS.	Feedback minuted under Agenda item of November 2021 and February 2022 and June 2022 meeting	On-going	Green
	Survey sent to 300 plus schools.		Chair and consultant. Consultant	Survey results provide information	Feedback minuted under Agenda item of November 2021 and February 2022 and June 2022 SACRE meeting		
7. Content of current AS reflected upon and modified if appropriate.	Current AS reflected upon and modified if appropriate in light of feedback from stakeholders	Autumn Term 2021- Spring /Summer 2022	Chair and consultant.	ASC delegates feel confident in their decisions about modified. Stakeholder's views on modified content sought.	Feedback minuted under Agenda item of November 2021 and February 2022 and June 2022 SACRE meeting	On going	Was Red now Amber ++

8. Draft versions of 2022/2023 syllabus produced for scrutiny and agreed on.	ASC	June 2022	Chair and consultant.		Revised 2022/2023 AS is available and completed by graphics department	Future intention	Amber +
9. Launch of AS -	Launch of AS -schools receive copies of the AS and reassurance on dates of roll out.	July 2022 Slippage now for the autumn 2022	LA with Entrust and members of SACRE		Revised AS is utilised in schools.	Future intention	R
Impact Summary				Area/s for further development			

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
29th June 2022
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
Applications for variation of practice

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider any applications for variation of practice to religious education and or collective worship.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Upon receipt of a written application from a headteacher of a county school SACRE should determine whether it is appropriate to dis-apply the requirement for broadly Christian collective worship and/or make amendments to the way the Agreed Syllabus is followed in the case of that school.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 That members of SACRE are updated on any new developments in this area.

4 Background

- 4.1 No applications have been received at this time.

5 Equal Opportunities

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications

Contact Officer:

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