

Religious Education and World Views in Cheshire West and Chester

Guidance

Intent of the RE Curriculum in Cheshire West and Chester

Through the teaching of Religious Education (RE), children learn the essential knowledge of other religions and worldviews, as well as skills and attitudes such as critical thinking and empathy. This understanding of others' worldviews is an essential first step to enabling each pupil to understand, reflect on and develop their own personal worldview, which is one of the core tasks of education.

According to The National Content Standard for Religious Education in England (2023), education in religion and worldviews should:

- 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 scholarly methods by which we can study religion, religious and non-religious 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.

Impact of the RE Curriculum in Cheshire West and Chester

It is essential that the key content, skills and attitudes that pupils are taught are monitored and tracked as they move through school. We know that children have gained the expected knowledge and understanding of other religions and worldviews through various types of formative and summative assessment, which is undertaken on a regular basis. Encouraging pupils to reflect on their own learning, as well as their own developing worldviews, is done through peer and self-assessment.

Essential Content and Vocabulary

Cheshire West and Chester SACRE request that all schools who are required to follow the Agreed Syllabus refer to the Essential Content document as a statutory requirement. There are separate primary and secondary documents. This is the minimum basis required for your RE Curriculum. It also includes the vocabulary which we expect children to be accessing and applying with increasing confidence.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Religion and World Views in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) should wherever possible begin with the child and allow opportunities to explore their personal experiences and questions which they have about the world around them. The RE curriculum provided should include opportunities for play, child initiated and adult initiated opportunities. During the year, the child will encounter Religion and World Views through stories, using specific words, special books, places, objects, events and where possible visiting places of worship and meeting believers. Events of a religious nature which are being celebrated in school will also provide opportunities for learning back in the classroom. There should be opportunities to develop a sense of wonder, to nurture curiosity, to let imaginations grow, have a sense of personal identity and an awareness and empathy for the world around them.

Through this syllabus we are asking Early Years Practitioners to design their own opportunities for Religious Education, taking into account the faith views your families hold. Whilst your content should be mainly Christianity, we have also introduced two specific festivals from Islam and Hindu Dharma (please see Essential Content document). We also suggest you mark events and festivals celebrated by the children in your class, look at links with your local community and international partnership schools. Children in EYFS should encounter ways of living and believing which are different and similar to those held by children in your class which promote uniqueness and diversity alongside unity.

There is a Cheshire West and Chester Council EYFS Guidance Pack which is a non-statutory accompaniment to this syllabus.

A Disciplinary Approach to RE

RE as a subject is not based upon a single discipline as highlighted in the RE Ofsted Research Review. Within the Optional Units of Work for Primary Schools you will see lessons listed as learning as Theologians, Philosophers and Sociologists.

Learning as a Theologian involves asking questions which believers may ask, looking at concepts through a theological lens, understanding examples of sacred text, concepts and stories, how people describe God, how there can be different interpretations of sacred text. You may be thinking about where a belief has originated and how it has changed over time.

When we learn as a philosopher, we ask questions through a philosophical lens which may include the nature of knowledge, existence and morality. We consider the process we take to answer these questions. We may be using enquiry methods

including Philosophy for Children (P4C) to enable discussion and debate about puzzling questions. Why do people have different ideas about God, questions about after death, learning from great philosophers.

When we learn as Sociologists we are asking questions about the lived reality, interviewing a visitor about how they celebrate a festival, finding out what happens at a wedding, how is an artefact used today, looking at Census data and what happens in our local and global communities, how people show they belong to a community, how religious and non-religious groups contribute to our society, how people express their beliefs in similar and different ways.

Promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values through RE

Religious Education provides opportunities to promote *spiritual development* through:

- finding meaning and purpose when looking at the world; discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, beliefs about God and values such as justice, honesty and truth.
- puzzling over 'ultimate questions of the meaning of life' e.g., life and death.
- considering how religions and other world views perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world and with God.
- valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging and self-awareness.
- developing their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues.
- learning about and reflecting on important concepts, experiences and beliefs that are at the heart of religious and world views.
- considering how beliefs and concepts in religion may be expressed through the creative and expressive arts.
- reflecting on personal beliefs and values which form a perspective of life with respect to different religions and world views.

Religious Education provides opportunities to promote *moral development* through:

- enhancing the values identified within the National Curriculum, particularly valuing diversity and engaging in issues of truth, justice and trust.
- exploring the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, sacred texts and guidance from religious leaders and world views.
- considering what is of ultimate value to pupils and believers through studying the key beliefs and teachings from religion and philosophy about values and ethical codes of practice and in so doing understanding and appreciating the viewpoints of others.
- studying a range of ethical issues, including those that focus on justice, to promote racial and religious tolerance and personal integrity and in so doing respect the civil and criminal law of England.

- gaining an understanding of and respect for the range of religious and world views and developing an opinion.

Religious Education provides opportunities to promote *social development* through:

- considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns.
- investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions and other world views as well as the common ground between them.
- developing the skills and personal qualities necessary for living and working together as part of a wider community, for example through discussion around key beliefs and ideas from religious and other world views.
- articulating pupils' own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues.
- acceptance and engagement with the British values of democracy; rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect and tolerance in relation to those of different faiths and beliefs.

Religious Education provides opportunities to promote *cultural development* through:

- promoting a sense of enjoyment and fascination when encountering people, literature, the creative and expressive arts and resources from differing cultures including their own and those of others.
- considering the relationship between religion and cultures and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices.
- celebrating diversity by promoting racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all; combating prejudice and discrimination; contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.

Religious Education provides opportunities to promote *British values* through:

- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and respected and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour.
- encouraging tolerance, mutual respect and positive attitudes towards diversity.
- exploring different religious codes for human life and comparing these with the rule of British law, e.g., how the Decalogue was the basis for British law.
- develop an understanding of the importance of individual liberty (which is protected in law) to choose and hold a religious or non-religious world view.
- understanding religious teachings on the rights and value of the individual and exploring the importance of fairness and democracy; the rule of law and justice.

(Based on 'Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools' DfE, Nov 2014, pp.5-6 and Ofsted' s definition School Inspection Handbook September 2015)

RE and Prevent

The Prevent duty within schools is to protect children from the risk of radicalisation. Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC) and British Values, along with RE, are key to every school's implementation of the Prevent duty.

RE enables children to develop an understanding of different faith's core beliefs and practices. This understanding, and the tolerance and mutual respect it engenders, is an integral part of every school's Prevent duty.

Controversial Issues and Responding to Media Events

Within RE teaching, issues that are controversial may arise. These may be linked to religious and other belief-based extremism. It is important that these issues, and the concerns and misunderstandings that may arise from them, are addressed in an environment that fosters debate, dialogue and the development of respect and understanding. Through its engagement with controversial issues, RE offers effective opportunities to develop pupils' critical thinking skills.

The following website provides advice and resources that will help support teachers in addressing contentious issues, particularly those sometimes linked with violent extremism.

www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resilience-teaching-controversial-topics/

Assessment Guidance

Assessment is an integral part of planning, teaching and learning in RE and enables teachers to:

- make meaningful judgements about pupil knowledge and learning through the programme of study, (both formative and summative.)
- monitor and track pupil progress over time e.g., three times per year.
- involve pupils in the learning and enquiring process through the sharing of key questions and learning objectives and through methods of self- assessment and peer assessment.
- report annually on pupil performance in RE to parents/guardians.

Progression Maps and Knowledge Organisers (Non-Statutory)

Primary schools may wish to adopt and adapt the created progression documents which show the development of a specific worldview throughout a child's journey through primary school, split according to suggested Golden Threads. There are also Knowledge Organisers online which were created by a team of teachers during Covid closures.

The Golden Threads listed (non-Statutory) are;

- Belief and authority
- Worship, life journeys and spirituality
- Equality and diversity

You are welcome to create Golden Threads for your own curriculum which are relevant for your own educational setting.

Guidance for visits and visitors.

Visiting places of worship and having visitors from a variety of faith groups in school provide invaluable learning opportunities and greatly enhance the R.E. curriculum. Pupils can gain a greater understanding of a religion by putting what has been learnt in the classroom into a vibrant and real-life context. They provide opportunities for children to learn about belief from a believer.

National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) offers a checklist for planning a visit and welcoming visitors into schools in the following document:

'natre.org.uk guidance on RE resources visits and visitors'

<https://www.natre.org.uk/about-re/guidance-on-resources/visits-and-visitors/>

Where to find support

There are two teacher advisers in CW&C for RE, Ben Cox at Tarporley High School and Naomi Anstice at Frodsham Manor House Primary School. Both are available for support. Additionally, Neil Duncalf is a member of SACRE representing Special Schools. Alison Williams is our SACRE Clerk and can be contacted on alison.williams@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk There are local cross phase groups who meet throughout the year after school providing teacher lead CPD. There is also an "RE in Cheshire West and Chester" Facebook group where everyone is kept updated.

With thanks to the members of the CWAC Syllabus Working Groups and their schools for their support.

Naomi Anstice (CWAC Advisor, Frodsham Manor House)

Cathy Batchelor (Doddleston)

Catherine Bennett (Alvanley and Manley)

Ben Cox (CWAC Advisor, Tarporley High)

Neil Duncalf (Greenbank)

Sue Ferguson (High Street)

Sue Glover (SACRE Diocese Rep)

Abi Hope (Winnington Park)

Rachel Inns (Hoole)
Liz Jenkins (Rudheath)
Rachel McCarthy (Farndon)
Catherine Speed (St Chad's)
Jodie Spencer (Meadow)
Catriona Stewart (SACRE Humanist Rep)
Jess Swindells (Whitby Heath School)
Lara Harris (Neston High School)
Laura Sandland-Jones (Blacon High School)
Eadaoin Merryweather (Queens Park High)