

Cheshire West and Chester RE Agreed Syllabus 2024 EYFS Guidance

1) Statutory Content for EYFS (Reception Classes)

This is the Statutory Content implemented in the Cheshire West Agreed Syllabus 2024. Previously, there was only guidance for EYFS practitioners, but following a review, working party recommendations to SACRE and discussions with Cheshire West and Chester SACRE a few changes have been introduced. However, you are likely to find that you already cover these areas.

This statutory content does not extend to EYFS in a nursery setting within a maintained school.

The majority of time will be allocated to Christianity. You need to cover the following Content Standards but are welcome to include more within your Religious Education following the Early Years Curriculum.

1. Develop curiosity as to why Christians do nativity plays at Christmas.
2. Explain why Christians give and receive presents at Christmas.
3. Explore why Christians say Jesus is special through the miracle stories.
4. Talk about how Christians might worship God in church.
5. Recall key important aspects of the Easter story & begin to say why Christians think the resurrection is important.
6. Talk about the Bible as a special book for Christians which has many special stories.

Alongside these it is now statutory for pupils in EYFS (Reception) to also have an encounter of a non-Abrahamic Worldview for which we have selected Hindu Dharma, and the next largest religious worldview in Cheshire West (2021 Census) which is Islam. They should also understand the lives of peers within their class and their local community developing their confidence with a range of religious and non-religious worldviews within their local area.

7. Understanding the World: Past & Present – Talk about the lives of the people around them & their roles in society.
8. Understanding the World: People, Culture and Communities - Know some similarities and differences between different religious/non-religious communities & how they celebrate in this country. Explore Diwali & Eid*.

Essential vocabulary for learners to be introduced to and for them to apply includes; *Christmas, incarnation, Easter, God, resurrection, church, Bible, Nativity, Christians, Christianity, minister, celebration, miracle, Son of God, Diwali, Eid.*

There is no requirement for RE to be taught as a discreet lesson. The decision for how to teach RE should be taken at a school level, justified by the school and EYFS Team.

There are seven areas of learning for EYFS and as a subject it can make a particular contribution to 5 of these including Communication and Language, Personal Social and Emotional Development, Literacy, Understanding the World, Expressive Art and Design. The strongest area to which RE contributes is Understanding the World.

To meet the Early Learning Goals and the requirements of the Cheshire West and Chester Agreed Syllabus, EYFS Reception classes should include specific planned activities (for example on festivals, special places and special times) which meet the Essential Content listed above as well as unplanned opportunities for understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews.

** Muslims celebrate two Eids annually, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. You are welcome to cover both or focus on Eid al-Fitr. Learners should understand that Eid is referring to a special time of a feast or festival and that there are two Eids.*

2) Non-Statutory Guidance for EYFS

RE in EYFS should start with the child's experience within the EYFS Curriculum and build on their interests. It should involve a mix of planned teaching, activities and purposeful play. There should be adult led and child led activities and an exploration of a key question.

Children should be taught about their own uniqueness and that of others and to be able to appreciate the differences and similarities which they encounter in others.

An Optional Scheme of Work for Cheshire West and Chester Primary Schools who follow the syllabus, will be developed and published online during the Autumn Term of 2024. It will be based on the following big questions. The numbers in brackets reference the Essential Content Standards listed above.

- 1) Special Stories. What is the Bible? (6) Autumn.
- 2) Special Times. How do Hindus Celebrate Diwali? (7,8) Autumn.
- 3) Special Times. Why do people perform Nativity plays at Christmas? Why do people give and receive presents? (1,2,6) Autumn.
- 4) Special People. Why do people believe Jesus is special? (3) Spring.
- 5) Special Times. Why is Easter a sad and a happy time? (5) Spring.
- 6) Special Places. What happens in a church? (4,6,7,8) Summer.
- 7) Special Stories. What do Christians believe about God? (3,4,6) Summer.
- 8) Special Times. How do Muslims celebrate Eid? (7,8) Summer.

Unit 6 will include ideas for visiting a local church or having a visitor from a local church.

These units will include reference to the development of Disciplinary Knowledge learning as a Theologian, a Sociologist and a Philosopher through a variety of questions and pedagogy. This is then developed throughout future years in primary and secondary education.

Remember to include the worldviews of the children in your class, teach about a festival before they celebrate it and share photographs of what happened at home afterwards (depending on the confidence of the child). You could also invite families in to help you to deliver a Diwali day etc.

The use of story in EYFS is essential as a steppingstone to what faith and belief actually mean.

3) Engaging families with RE

Be transparent with your families about the opportunities for learning in RE both in school and out. Raise the profile of the subject in school and your local community by sharing photographs and creating mini films. Host a drop-in day linked to a festival where families can help with activities. Families may appreciate you letting them know about local cultural events that they could join in with like the Diwali celebrations in Chester, Mosque open days, events organised by the local Interfaith Network or local special events. Include on your EYFS news good wishes for upcoming festivals.

4) An example of Good Progress in EYFS from the RE Council Handbook of Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom.

4-5 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.

5) Time for RE

There is no statutory requirement from the Agreed Syllabus in relation to the amount of curriculum time to be spent on RE. There are time recommendations from Key Stage One upwards.

6) Persona Dolls

Introduce persona dolls alongside real life people and photographs (Belonging and Believing resources by Gill Vaisey). The life story of the persona doll stays the same

throughout the school so familiarise yourself with their information card. Treat your persona doll as a visitor to your RE lessons who has a story to tell.

7) Top Tips for RE and Worldviews in EYFS by Cheshire West and Chester EYFS leaders

- Look for festivals and special events throughout the year and have a long-term plan for what you would ideally like to achieve.
- Avoid literal stories where you may confuse children, approach stories from child's level E.g., Noah's Ark, focus on rainbow and God's promise, saving animals, building a boat. Avoid talking about floods and disappearance of people.
- Try whole school approach, topics and differentiate into classes i.e., awe and wonder (rainbows, spider's webs, size of things, creation story, friendship, love. You could have a verse from a sacred text to link with a theme)
- Using parables to focus on prime areas earlier on, link parables to continuous provision e.g. The foolish Man, one builds house in sand, one in rock and then can discuss, this can be then linked to story tales, sand trays, block area etc.
- Special areas and displays for RE, continuous symbols and special books, good practice to have an interactive area.
- Use a special mascot or teddy for RE time only, children can then identify that this is RE time, use familiar resources, books etc. alongside a mascot to fully engage children for example, puddles the cat and other familiar resources.
- Use persona dolls so children can identify the differences and similarities in worldviews.
- Use different spaces for RE, use the forest school, teach in a tent, learn about Harvest in the school allotments, local places of worship.
- Embedding practice with tangible resources
- Emphasise listening to others, all views are important, how you can show respect.
- Develop a sense of belonging alongside personal identity.
- Start to develop thinking skills by supporting children to design questions, look at a photo and ask children to finish your sentence "I wonder why...?"
- Introduce visits and visitors in Early Years, invite pupils' families to come and share an aspect of their own faith.
- Links to whole school SMSC provision (including British Values)
- Get involved with local networking opportunities for RE and share good practice with other schools.

8) Recommended resources for EYFS.

The units above will include books by Gill Vaisey from **Books @ Press**, in particular the Puddles and Freddie series and Belonging and Believing.

BBC have a range of resources for EYFS including 30 episodes of **Treasure Champs** which look at a range of values and include many religious stories, **Religions of the World** are animated stories including Christmas, Easter, Rama, and Sita. On BBC Bitesize you will find animated clips on guides to places of worship. A search on BBC Teach Assemblies will also find a calendar of clips according to festivals throughout the year. On CBeebies you can find the series "Let's Celebrate" and "My First Festivals."

True Tube have a series of programmes about visiting places of worship and a Key Stage One / EYFS series called Charlie and Blue.

Small world sets (Happyland etc) would be useful for lesson resourcing and continuous provision.

Children should be taught to handle any artefacts with care and respect showing empathy for how they are used by someone with a particular religious worldview. The use of artefacts will be highlighted within the units of work as using **Special Objects**. EYFS Teachers are welcome to contact the local RE Primary Adviser through the SACRE Clerk for advice when using particular artefacts.