

# Programme of study (non-statutory): Religious education (Key stage 3)

## Curriculum aims

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

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

## The importance of religious education

RE provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions, and other world views that offer answers to questions such as these. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as pupils' awareness of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

RE encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

RE encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. RE has an important role in preparing pupils for

Religious education is a statutory subject in the curriculum. However, there are no statutory programmes of study at national level. In 2004, the Department for Education and Skills and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority published a non-statutory national framework for RE, to be used by local agreed syllabus conferences for the development of agreed syllabuses for RE, and by faith communities for the development of RE programmes. Schools are legally required to teach RE according to their local agreed syllabus or, in schools with a religious character, according to their governors' policy. For voluntary aided schools, RE should be determined by the governors in accordance with the trust deed. The content of this non-statutory RE programme of study is the same as the key stage 3 element of the non-statutory national framework. The presentation and headings follow the format of the programmes of study for other subjects at key stage 3, to enable cross-curricular planning to take place.

adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

## Key concepts

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

### Beliefs, teachings and sources

- Interpreting teachings, sources, authorities and ways of life in order to understand [religions and beliefs](#).
- [Understanding and responding critically](#) to beliefs, values and attitudes.

### Practices and ways of life

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

### Expressing meaning

- Appreciating that individuals and cultures express their beliefs and values through [many different forms](#).

### [Identity](#) and belonging

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

### Meaning, purpose and truth

- Exploring some of the [ultimate questions](#) that confront humanity, and responding to them.

### Religions and beliefs

This includes systems of thought that are religious and non-religious, theistic and non-theistic, western/Abrahamic and eastern/dharmic.

### Understanding and responding critically

This contributes to pupils' spiritual and moral development and to their growing confidence, sense of freedom and responsibility.

Spiritual development is part of the overall aims of education. It is open to everyone, not confined to the development of religious beliefs or conversion to a particular faith. Although difficult to define, spiritual development may be said to have the following aspects: beliefs, sense of awe, wonder and mystery, experiencing feelings of transcendence, search for meaning and purpose, self-knowledge, relationships, creativity, feelings and emotions. Moral development may be said to include the will to behave morally as a point of principle, knowledge of codes of conduct, criteria for responsible moral judgements, and ability to make judgements.

As pupils aged 11 to 14 grow towards cognitive, social and emotional maturity, opportunities to discuss and reflect on issues of difference, similarity and meaning can strengthen their independence and deepen their sense of identity.

### Exploring the impact of religions and beliefs

The influence of belief can change the world for better or worse. This could include unexamined assumptions, such as those about race, religion or money and possessions, that underpin decisions and lifestyles. They can be critically explored through discussions of news events, religious stories or school events and the possible motives of the people in them.

### Religious practices

Perceptions of religious practices can vary according to individuals' assumptions or cultures.

### Many different forms

This includes writing, speaking, silence, art, music, dress, dance, food, ritual, artefacts, relationships, behaviour codes and social action.

## Values and commitments

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

### Identity

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

### Exploring the variety, difference and relationships

This can promote understanding and dialogue, underpin a commitment to respect and inclusion and help pupils engage creatively and confidently with a diverse world.

This could include taking part in visits, speaker events, web-based investigations, dialogues or community projects that involve understanding differences and seeing similarities.

### Ultimate questions

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

### Choices

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

# Key processes

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

## Learning about religion

Pupils should be able to:

- [investigate](#) the impact of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies, the reasons for [commitment](#) and the causes of diversity
- apply a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary consistently and accurately, recognising both the power and limitations of language in expressing religious ideas and beliefs
- explain religious beliefs, practices and commitments, including their transmission by people, texts and traditions
- [evaluate](#) how religious beliefs and teachings inform answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues
- [interpret](#) a range of sources, texts, authorities, and forms of religious and spiritual expression from a variety of contexts
- [analyse](#) religious beliefs, arguments and ideas.

## Learning from religion

Pupils should be able to:

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

### Investigate

The investigation could address, for example, the reasons for prayer, and involve collecting and sorting information on worship rituals.

### Commitment

This should include reasons why people might belong to a faith community or other belief system.

### Evaluate

The evaluation could address, for example, the range of religious and moral responses to the question of whether a person should fight in a war.

### Interpret

This could include exploring competing interpretations of doctrines and sacred texts, or communicating reasons why a text was written.

### Analyse

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

### World issues

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

### Ultimate questions

An example of an ultimate question related to a world issue might be ‘How might the beliefs and attitudes of a community be changed by suffering or by prosperity?’

### Evaluate beliefs, commitments and the impact of religion

This should include evaluating their own and others’ beliefs about why people belong to faith communities, what challenges and tensions might be caused by belonging to a faith, and about world issues.

### Express

This could include responding to moral and religious problems, for example conflict, as well as sharing and questioning assumptions, for example about good and evil, and developing responses to problems, for example about inter-religious or communal relations.

# Range and content

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

The study of RE should include:

- [Christianity](#)
- [at least two other principal religions](#)
- [a religious community of local significance](#), where appropriate
- [a secular world view](#), where appropriate.

All of the above can be taught through the following themes:

- beliefs and concepts: the key ideas and questions of meaning in religions and beliefs, including issues related to God, truth, the world, human life, and life after death
- authority: different sources of authority and how they inform believers' lives
- [religion and science](#): issues of truth, explanation, meaning and purpose
- [expressing spirituality](#): how and why understanding of the self and human experiences are expressed in a variety of forms
- ethics and relationships: questions and influences that inform ethical and moral choices, including forgiveness and issues of good and evil
- rights and responsibilities: what religions and beliefs say about human rights and responsibilities, social justice and citizenship
- global issues: what religions and beliefs say about [health](#), wealth, war, animal rights and the environment
- interfaith dialogue: a study of [relationships, conflicts and collaboration within and between religions and beliefs](#).

## **Christianity**

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

## **At least two other principal religions**

These include, as listed in the non-statutory national framework, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. By the end of key stage 3 all these principal religions should have been studied in sufficient depth.

## **A religious community of local significance**

These include, as exemplified in the non-statutory national framework, the Baha'i faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism.

## **A secular world view**

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

## **Religion and science**

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

## **Expressing spirituality**

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

## **Health**

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

## **Relationships, conflicts and collaboration within and between religions and beliefs**

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

# Curriculum opportunities

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

The curriculum should provide opportunities for pupils to:

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

## **Use ICT to enhance understanding of religion**

This could include using the internet to research places of worship and using email to communicate with people of different faiths in different countries.

## **Discuss, question and evaluate**

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

## **Ethical issues**

This could include a wide variety of topics, for example the difference between right and wrong, the application of principles to issues in crime/punishment, war/peace, family life, relationships, use of money and property, entertainment, employment, technology, and religious and cultural toleration.

## **Forms of expression**

This could include creative and thoughtful use of art, dance, drama, writing and ICT.

## **Other subject areas**

This could include arts, humanities, language, literature, technology and science.