

Agreed Syllabus 2013 religious education

The Dudley Agreed Syllabus

Foreword

Religious Education (RE) in this country is distinctive in being locally agreed within each Local Authority. RE rightly strives to be relevant to the lives of young people of all faiths and none and this syllabus draws on the experience of the local faith communities within the Borough of Dudley.

Now, as much as ever, it is vital that young people are able to understand themselves within the context of a diverse society so that they are equipped to be active citizens with the confidence to participate with peers whose background can often be different to their own. The Government's emphasis on integration points to the importance of establishing common ground with a clear sense of shared aspirations and values though this can only come about if we have confidence to learn from those different to ourselves.

In 2005, the Community Strategy for the Borough identified a number of priorities. These included building communities capable of absorbing tensions and developing more positive aspects of community life, increasing harmony between people from different backgrounds and improving the profile of young people within communities.

RE contributes to cohesion and integration. It also continues to be a very popular subject. Nationally over 60% of all 16 year olds choose to take RE at GCSE level whilst A level numbers have doubled in the last fifteen years. Most 18-24 year olds continue to see the relevance of RE and its importance within a broad and balanced education.

In Dudley we are proud of the accomplishments of pupils and with them the commitment of teachers of RE. Pupils across Dudley schools have performed consistently above average in GCSE full course in recent years. At the same time, we note Dudley SACRE's concern at the implications of the English Baccalaureate introduced in 2010 and the growing evidence of its impact on what should be the statutory entitlement of pupils to RE in Key Stage 4. The formation of the All Parliamentary Group of MPs on RE is a sign nationally of the continuing importance of religious education.

Meanwhile, locally within the Borough, we commend the new agreed syllabus for RE to you.

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This document contains a lot of detailed information and advice to help schools provide high quality, challenging and exciting religious education for young people. You are advised to read the entire document. We think you will find it helpful.

However, for those who want summary statements or who wish to read the particularly important parts, you are advised to read those sections which are printed, like this statement, in panels which have a pale green background.

The importance of religious education

Religious education has a very important role in the education of every young person. Religion and belief has been and continues to be highly visible in public life locally, nationally and internationally. Without some knowledge of religion any understanding of the contemporary world be less than adequate. Religion has concerned itself with moral and social questions. It has also sought to address fundamental questions to do with what sustains human existence and what gives it value and purpose. Education needs to play its part in helping young people to consider such questions and by doing so help young people engage in their own personal search for meaning. Religious education plays a principle role in this.

Religious education encourages pupils to learn about religion and so gain knowledge and understanding of the principal religious traditions and of other belief traditions. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religious beliefs, teaching, practices and of the various forms of religious expression. It also encourages pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the influence religion has on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

Religious education also encourages pupils to learn from different religions and beliefs. It does this by providing opportunities for personal reflection and by helping pupils to consider and express their views. Religious education encourages pupils to explore their own beliefs, values and traditions and the grounds upon which their beliefs and values are based. Religious education challenges pupils to reflect on, analyse and evaluate issues to do with belief, faith, beliefs about God, the purpose of life, ultimate meaning, the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. Pupils, through religious education, are encouraged to communicate their responses, to be challenged by the views of others and to rigorously explore the basis on which their views are founded so that their views are not based on unquestioned assumptions but have been looked into and thought about.

Religious education also attempts to enable pupils to flourish as individuals within the community as citizens of a pluralistic society and of a global community. Religious education has an important role in preparing pupils for lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others particularly for those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It seeks to promote discernment and to enable pupils to combat prejudice.

The Calvary Church in Kingswinford began in 1985 and has grown rapidly in size.



The legal position

Religious education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools. This includes all 'registered pupils' in reception and all students in post 16 education in maintained schools. Religious education is part of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools.

Each LA must convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to produce a syllabus. Once adopted by the LA the programme of study of the agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught. The attainment levels set out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages. The Education Act 1996 states that an agreed syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. The law does not define what the principal religions represented in Great Britain are but this agreed syllabus defines 'the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' as being – Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

Time allocation for RE

Dudley SACRE recognises that precise hours are difficult to define as schools operate with different curriculum models. The key is whether or not sufficient time is given for the agreed syllabus to be delivered. However, schools should take account of the recommended guidelines.

Early Years Foundation stage	approximately 5% of total curriculum time
Key stage 1	36 hours per year
Key stage 2	45 hours per year
Key stage 3	45 hours per year
Key stage 4	approximately 5% of total curriculum time
Post 16	at least 10-15 hours per year

RE requirement for different schools

In community schools, foundation and voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled schools without a religious character religious education must be taught in accordance with the agreed syllabus. In voluntary-controlled schools with a religious character and also in trust schools religious education must also be taught in accordance with the agreed syllabus.

In voluntary-aided schools with a religious character, religious education is determined by the governors in accordance with the school's trust deeds. The Church of England diocese policy is that Church of England voluntary-aided schools in the borough should teach RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.

Academies are all-ability, state-funded schools managed by independent sponsors. An Academy is required to provide RE as part of their curriculum for all pupils. The RE that is taught in an Academy must be in accordance with the funding agreement. The funding agreement may state that RE will be taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.

Right of Withdrawal

The 1944 Education Act, reaffirmed in the 1988 Act, which gives parents the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE.

The use of the right of withdrawal should be at the instigation of parents (or students themselves if they are aged 18 or over), and should be in writing. It should make it clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. Where pupils are withdrawn from RE schools have a duty to supervise them though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.

Though not legally required, it is good practice for a head teacher to invite parents who wish to exercise their right of withdrawal to discuss their request with the school. Schools may ensure that parents who wish to withdraw their child from RE are aware of the educational objectives of RE, the importance of RE, what is being covered in the RE curriculum and that they are given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.

Whilst parents or carers have a right to withdraw their children from the subject of RE, they should note that children may also encounter religions and beliefs in other parts of the curriculum from which there is no right of withdrawal. Every school has a duty to promote community cohesion and this includes helping pupils understand ideas about identity and diversity, including within a religious context and a context of non-religious beliefs.

The aims of religious education

The principal aims of religious education may be expressed in the form of two attainment targets, 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'.

Attainment target 1: Learning about religion

Attainment target 1

Learning about religion is mainly concerned with pupils developing their **knowledge** and **understanding** of religion. It includes enquiry into the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings, sources, practices and ways of life. It includes not merely the acquisition of knowledge leading to a descriptive account of religion. It also includes applying skills like interpretation and analysis in order to arrive at an understanding of what belonging to a religion means from the point of view of a believer. *Learning about religion* also includes developing an understanding of how religions have responded to ultimate questions and to ethical issues. Examples of ultimate questions would include, 'Why are we alive?' 'Why do people suffer?' 'Does God exist?' 'How am I to live life?' 'Is there a life after death?' *Learning about religion* also includes knowledge and understanding of how there are differences within religions, but also how religions are similar.

The two core words which sum up this attainment target are **knowledge** and **understanding**.

The following two pages provides a much fuller explanation of what *Learning about religion* means.

Learning about religion attainment target 1

Learning about religion is understood to be more than just factual or descriptive knowledge about religion. Factual or descriptive knowledge about religion has to do with those aspects of a religion which in the main can be seen, touched, smelt, heard or tasted. As an illustration of this, if we imagine a series of lessons about infant baptism during which young people might learn:

- where a baptism might take place
- who might be present – a priest, parents, godparents
- what the font is
- how the baby may be dressed for this special occasion
- what happens in the ceremony, including the hopes and promises expressed
- what might happen during the celebration after the ceremony

All of this information is genuine learning about, in this case, the religion of Christianity. We could call it factual knowledge. If a young person were able to organise this information into a correct chronologically account of what happens during a typical infant baptism we could say that they have a descriptive knowledge of infant baptism. Important and valuable though this information is, religious education must attempt as the Schools Council 'Working Paper 36' put it to 'transcend the informative'. This means looking beyond what is factually or descriptively observable and helping young people to understand what infant baptism really is about.

Transcending the informative

In other words beyond what is observable there is another level of information which provides a fuller account of what infant baptism is. For example, if it were possible to question the priest conducting the service what they thought infant baptism was really about we might be told that baptism was a way of welcoming the child into the Christian community. The mother's view however might be rather different. She might say that for her baptism is about saying 'thank you' to God for giving her a beautiful baby. A godparent might say that she thinks baptism is about cleansing the child of the sin we are all born with. Another view might be that baptism marked the child's entry into the Christian Church but that the child would have to confirm this entry for themselves when they were old enough to do so.

To properly understand the significance of infant baptism young people must be helped to understand some of these ideas that are associated with the ceremony. This sort of probing beneath the surface into the significance of baptism is still *learning about religion*. Coming to grips with ideas and views of this kind still involves young people in *learning about* Christianity. However, it is knowledge which is beyond the kind which is merely factual or descriptive. It is knowledge which helps a young person to *understand* why Christians choose to baptise their very young children and so its role in helping young people to *understand* a religion is crucial. The word '*understand*' in this context means 'comprehend'. By more fully comprehending what a ceremony like baptism means to those that do believe in infant baptism provides the basis on which the appreciation of what is going on can be established. This probing beneath the surface knowledge leading to *understanding* is therefore crucial as it provides the basis on which respect for the beliefs and practices of others is grounded. Without knowing why rituals, festivals, ceremonies, etc. are significant to members of religious communities religion can appear as something which is merely exotic and only of interest because it is odd.

The same process of probing beneath the surface in order to gain understanding applies throughout religious education. It is for this reason that when helping young people to *learn about* Islam it is not enough to teach them only factual or descriptive knowledge. For example, during a series of lessons young people might be taught that when Muslims pray they:

- wash before they begin
- pray five times a day
- stand on a mat
- face towards Makkah
- undertake a series of body positions – standing, bowing, prostration
- speak certain words in Arabic

The heart of the matter

Correct though such information is, it does not encompass all that is meant by the phrase *learning about religion*. In order to learn about Muslim worship properly teachers must explore with their pupils beneath the surface into Islamic worship in an attempt to understand what significance worship has in the lives of Muslims. For example, if a Muslim were asked why they performed Salah, the five times a day prayer, they may say that it is because it is their religion, or that it is one of the Five Pillars, or because it is in the Qur'an. Valid though such responses are they do not really get to the heart of the matter but rather they beg the question. If pressed a Muslim may say that prayer brings benefits as every few hours prayer reminds them that God is always with them. Another Muslim might say that the bowing and prostration is a way of saying openly in public that they are submitted to God. Another response may be to say that by lowering their face to the ground in prayer they acquire the gift of humility and that prayer provides a defence against becoming pompous and smug. Yet another view may be that prayer gives them solidarity, a sense of being connected to Muslims everywhere. Another Muslim might say that after praying they feel cleansed inside so that the thing or things they got wrong in the hours since they last prayed, like being irritated with somebody, have been washed away and they can try again with a clean sheet.

In other words worship in Islam is undertaken for a multitude of reasons. It has a deeper significance and a profounder impact on a Muslim's life far beyond what we may know if we are simply told that it is one of the Five Pillars. It is this deeper significance and impact which young people will need some help in discovering as it is only by getting past the external aspects of Islam that the faith is disclosed as a faith of dignity and worth and not as an unfathomable attachment to number, times, uniformity and repetition. Without some attempt to get to this deeper significance and impact the level of *learning about* Islam will always be rudimentary.

Learning about religion is also more than just *learning about* ceremonies and rituals like baptism or worship. *Learning about* the beliefs and teachings of religion, the lives and stories associated with leaders of religion, the practices, both in places of worship and in the home, the various ways in which faith may express itself through art, dance, imagery, myth and music, are all to do with *learning about religion*. *Learning about religion* is also about finding out how religion may give some people a strong sense of identity and belonging and how religion has sought to answer ultimate questions to do with purpose, meaning and destiny 'Why are we here?' 'Why are we alive?' 'Why do we suffer?' 'Why do we die?' 'Is there a life after death?' *Learning about religion* is also learning about the moral rules and principles religions have taught and how religion has in the past, and continues today, to attempt to provide answers to contemporary moral and social issues.

Attainment target 2: Learning from religion

Attainment target 2

Learning from religion is mainly concerned with pupils' personal development. It involves helping pupils to reflect on and articulate the beliefs and values which form the basis of their own personal search for meaning. The purpose of religious education in all maintained schools is clearly not about nurturing young people into a particular faith – this is the responsibility of the family and of faith communities. *Learning from religion* is however concerned with helping pupils, of whatever faith, or of no faith, to identify and express their own deeper thoughts, feelings and beliefs in response to religion and in response to life. It includes helping pupils to think about and **evaluate** how, if at all, religion may inform their views or may suggest ways in which religion may have **application** or insights which inform their own life. *Learning from religion* has to do with encouraging pupils to develop and communicate their own ideas and views and to test the basis of those views by rigorous self-examination and by being challenged by the views of others. *Learning from religion* encourages young people to try to articulate their beliefs and values in order to formulate them and make them more clear both to themselves and others. However *learning from religion* is not about simply encouraging young people to have a view or to have opinions. Young people are encouraged to rigorously explore their views and to go on exploring their views, testing the basis on which their views are founded in order that their views and beliefs are founded on an informed basis and make consistent and credible sense.

The two core words which sum up this attainment target are **evaluation** and **application**.

The following pages (p.9-16) provide a much fuller account of what *Learning from religion* means.

Learning from religion attainment target 2

Learning from religion is not about more knowledge, information, understanding, insight or awareness about religion. Rather it is about how each young person responds to the religious material they encounter. It is about how each young person evaluates the religious material they learn about, what judgement they make as to its truth, or what application or what relevance they think the religious material they have learnt about might, or might not, play in their lives.

Learning from religion morally

The most obvious example of the way in which young people might *learn from religion* is that of *learning from religion* morally. The best way to explain this is to take a particular example – the parable of the Good Samaritan will serve. In an RE classroom young people might learn that the Good Samaritan story was told by Jesus, that the story appears in Luke's gospel, that in it a man travels from Jerusalem to Jericho, that the man gets robbed, is beaten up and is left for dead, etc., all of this is *learning about religion*.

Young people might also learn that many Christians if asked what the story means they might say it's telling us that if a person is in difficulty we should help them. Or some Christians might say the story means - if a person is in difficulty, even if they are a stranger, then we should go out of our way to help them. Or some Christians might say the story means – a person who has been unkind to us including even a

person who is an enemy to us, if they need help we should still go out of way to help them and we should not expect to be thanked or to get anything back in return. Interpretations of this kind might be expressed by Christians and also by non-Christians. Information of this kind increases pupil's knowledge and understanding of a Christian story and of Christian teaching and belief and so both the facts of the story and what the story might be telling us, is *learning about religion*.

However, if young people were asked to evaluate the story, that is to make a judgement as to its truth, or what application or what relevance the story has for them when it comes to how they act or what they believe, then we are in different territory – pupils would now be involved in *learning from religion*. Thus *learning from religion* might be undertaken in the following way:

Having been reminded of the story of the Good Samaritan, young people might be asked to think about the situation involving a girl called Amy and to discuss in small groups the statement printed in bold italic

'Amy is a new girl in the class. She is a bit overweight; she is very shy and awkward. Three girls in the class pick on her all the time, calling her names, hiding her bag and jostling her in the corridor. Often you have seen her alone and in tears. You've told the form teacher but nothing seems to happen.'

'You should look after yourself and your own family and friends and not worry about other people.'

Bearing in mind the situation involving Amy, in small groups discuss the statement printed in bold. Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Explain why.

In the case involving Amy, the Good Samaritan story is being used to explore a 'micro' moral issue but it may also be used to explore a 'macro' moral issue like global poverty, for example, the statement to be discussed might be changed to:

'People must look after their family before they worry about the poor'

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons to support your answer.

By using activities of this kind in RE young people are no longer involved in *learning about religion*. The nature of the activity has shifted. They are now no longer *learning about* Christianity although Christianity may well feature in the answer they give. Young people are now being asked to explore their inner beliefs and values. They are being asked to articulate them so that they become clearer in their own mind as to what they believe and why they hold those beliefs. By doing so they are now involved in *learning from religion*.

By requiring young people to 'Explain why', that is to explain how they arrived at their judgement it is being made clear that simply having an opinion about some aspect of religious life or belief is not sufficient. *Learning from religion* is not only about evaluating religion, it is also a self-evaluation process. Young people are being asked to scrutinise and test the basis on which their own values and beliefs are based. They are being asked to rigorously explore their views and to go on exploring their views, testing the basis on which their views are founded in order that their views and beliefs are founded on an informed basis and make consistent and credible sense.

Learning from religious truth-claims

A second and equally important way in which young people may *learn from religion* has to do with the claims to truth which all religions make. Some religious truth-

claims are shared by many, although not by all religions, for example:

- there is a God
- God created the universe
- God responds to prayer
- after death there is a judgement

Some truth-claims are unique to particular religions, or in some cases specific to groups of people within particular religions, for example:

- Christ rose from the dead
- Muhammad is the Prophet of God
- The Bible is the word of God
- Our next life is determined by the law of karma

The spirit of enquiry

Given its claim to be an educational activity religious education cannot have an evangelical role of trying to persuade or to confirm in pupils the belief that religious truth-claims of this kind, are indeed true. However, that does not mean that RE should avoid the beliefs and truth-claims religious believers make. As religious education is a genuine educational activity then it must be involved in developing in young people the spirit of enquiry and curiosity. For this reason questions which arise from truth-claims like, 'Does prayer work?' 'Did the Red Sea part?' 'Is there a heaven?' 'Did Jesus rise from the dead?' should not be avoided but rather they are a necessary part of what RE is about.

When such questions are being tackled young people may be taught, 'this is what many Muslims believe about prayer' or 'this is what many Christians believe about the resurrection'. When this takes place then pupils will be involved in *learning about religion*. But when it is young people themselves that are being encouraged to think about and to answer for themselves, 'Do you think prayer works?' or 'Do you think Jesus rose from the dead?' then the type of learning that will be taking place will be distinctively different – it will be *learning from religion*.

When engaged in *learning from religion* young people will be encountering the questions and issues which have traditionally been the stuff of religion – Is there a God? Are miracles true? Is Holy Scripture without error? – as was the case with *learning from religion* morally, young people are being asked to rigorously explore their views on such questions, testing the basis on which their views are founded.

The role of religious education in this process is not to be the final arbitrator on whether these truth-claims are true or not. *Learning from religion* does not mean that pupils simply learn what the religions have said about truth-claims and simply regurgitate this information. If this was all that pupils were being asked to do then pupils would still be *learning about religion*. However, religion may well inform how a young person finds their own answers to important religious truth-claims. The answer they arrive at may well give them a sense of meaning but it may not exactly be the answer a member of a religious tradition might suggest.

The role of religion here is not to be the neat supplier of the answers. Instead the role of religion, or rather one of the roles of religion here, is to be the supplier of the questions. The answers religion provides are not irrelevant here. They may serve to stimulate or inform the views which a young person may find helpful or meaningful. Of course, when responding to a question like, 'If there is a loving God, why is there suffering in the world?' some young people may well respond by making use of arguments and evidence which may be expressed by Christians, Muslims, or Sikhs. They may do so because the young person answering the question may themselves

be a member of the Christian, Muslim or Sikh community. However, some young people if we are asking them for their answer to this question their honest response may contain very little explicit reference to the arguments and views expressed within organised religion. The measure of the quality of response a young person shows when asked to discuss and express their view about a religious truth-claim is to be found in their insights into the nature of the issue they have been asked their views about. It is to be found in the quality of their thinking and reasoning. It is not to be found in a detailed account of how Christians or how Muslims have answered the problem, however accurate and comprehensive that account may be. The nature of the learning a young person gains from *learning from religion* is not always more content about religion. Such content may play a part but only if it serves to make clearer the views of the young person. Instead the learning which some young people may be acquiring is to be found primarily in the insights they gain into their own views and the development they make in making it clear to themselves, and to others the grounds upon which their views are based.

A personal search for meaning

By trying to express their own view in response to religious questions young people should become clearer in their own mind about what their response is to important religious questions. By critically engaging with important questions which religion raises they *learn from religion* what for them has meaning and what for them is true. By doing so *learning from religion* engages young people in their own personal search for meaning. In addition to this, *learning from religion* requires young people to learn how to exercise their thinking and their reasoning skills in relation to religious questions. They are *learning how* to weigh up evidence, to judge probability, to recognise inconsistency and contradiction in thinking, they are *learning how* to consider views contrary to their own and if alternative views offer a direct challenge to their view they are learning about the strengths and weaknesses of these alternative views and how they might appropriately respond or rebuff such views. Ideally, they are learning to assemble their thoughts together to produce a clearer and more coherent insight into what gives them meaning, what they think is true, and what it is they value.

This exploration of the truth-claims of religion is not undertaken in order to undermine a young person's beliefs and views. Although *learning from religion* should be rigorous, its intention is not to threaten faith. Ultimately *learning from religion* seeks to ensure that the views of all young people, whether they are religious or not, are well founded and that they make consistent and credible sense. A person's views are not well founded if they are based on unquestioned assumptions or inconsistent thinking.

It is through this questioning and exploring process that a young person's views and beliefs are rigorously tested and forged. Through this process the beliefs and views which they emerge with are well grounded in their understanding. They do not simply attempt to defend their beliefs or views by claiming 'that's my opinion' or 'that's what I happen to believe' or even 'that's what I've always been told'. Rather they have some awareness of the underlying reasons which support their view. Thus a young person's beliefs and views are given some roots so that when in adult life they experience the slings and arrows life will throw at them everything they believe doesn't just crumble around them because they were never encouraged to question or seriously think about their beliefs before. *Learning from religion* requires young people to rigorously explore their views and beliefs and to go on exploring their views, testing the basis on which they are founded in order that they are founded on an informed basis which they know and understand.

The development of personhood

This grounding of beliefs and views in an individual's understanding is crucial to what we mean when we talk about being a person. An individual is not truly developed as a person if they do not understand the basis, or have some ideas or reasons why they affirm the beliefs and values that they do.

Part of what being a person means, is not to be living a life with an inactive mind and so not understanding the basis on which one's values and beliefs are grounded, whether those beliefs are religious or are beliefs which are not based on a religious faith. Being a person entails living an examined life. Learning from religion is thus firmly rooted in the Socratic claim that 'examining both myself and others is really the very best thing that a man can do and that life without this sort of examination is not worth living...' In other words, 'the unexamined life is not worth living'.

The personal search for meaning is just that – finding meaning cannot be something given to a person or undertaken on their behalf. A sense of meaning to life cannot be imposed. It must be meaning which the individual understands, grasps and accepts for themselves. Religious education does not provide the religious answers or any other sorts of answers to life. Religious education does not provide the painting, it provides the paint box.

Identity and belonging

Learning from religion has to do, as we have seen, with evaluating the truth-claims of religion. This is called **Impersonal Evaluation**. Impersonal evaluation is impersonal because the subject that is being evaluated is not the person, meaning the young person themselves but rather the truth-claims of religion. However, *learning from religion* also has to do with encouraging young people to think about what they are like as a person. Religious education encourages young people to hold the mirror up to themselves and to honestly look at themselves, at their strengths and their weaknesses as a person. When young people do this they are engaged in a reflective, personal self-examination of themselves. Because the subject of the examination is one's own person it is called **Personal Evaluation**.

Personal evaluation is undertaken because of the hope and belief that our character and personality, our way of being a person, is not fixed but that we can in a sense shape the way we want to be. By doing so a person may become more like the person they want to be. By slow degrees they acquire an identity which they are comfortable with, perhaps even happy with, and in which they may find a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. Religious education is not the only area of the curriculum engaged in personal development. When RE is involved in helping young people to think about their identity and sense of belonging it is at its closest, indeed it often overlaps with PSHE.

Religious education engages young people in self-examination of themselves by using religious material to serve as a spring board. For example, in a famous Sikh story Guru Nanak disappears in the River Bein. On the river bank he leaves behind feeling afraid as to what has happened his close friend, Mardana. At this point in the story young people might be asked, 'Have you ever felt afraid?' 'What are you most afraid of?' 'When you are afraid how do you deal with it?'

The nature of the lesson has now significantly shifted from what has been called 'Object knowing' about Sikhism to 'Subject knowing' knowing about the self. In other words young people are now not *learning about religion* but are *learning from religion* by being asked to consider their identity as a person, in particular how as a person they cope with being afraid. Similarly, religious material may be used to spring board

consideration of other traits which characterise our own identity. These traits may cause us not to like ourselves – traits like feeling worthless, or rejected, or being envious, selfish, angry or resentful. Or they may be traits we wish we could develop in ourselves like being generous, friendly or truthful.

Religion is full of examples of people whose strong sense of personal identity and attachment to certain principles enabled them to show enormous resistance to the prejudice and social pressure of the wider community. The Prophet Muhammad's strong and clear sense of identity, for example, enabled him to resist the social and financial pressure to conform to the will of the merchant leaders of Makkah. Guru Nanak similarly showed great personal courage when he reprimanded the military leader Babar for his cruelty. Jesus also refused to fall into line with the accepted view of how female adultery should be treated. These examples provide lessons in life for young people. From such examples young people might learn how they too might develop a strong sense of personal identity and how moral courage, integrity, magnanimity and generosity of spirit may become traits which become part of their identity.

A sense of Belonging

The concepts of identity and belonging are very closely related. For many people their sense of identity is closely bound to their sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves. A person may have a strong sense of belonging to a family community, it may be a community of friends, or a community of people who are engaged in a common enterprise. For example, many people gain a strong sense of belonging from the work they do with others. An aspect of *learning from religion* is to encourage young people to reflect on in what sense they do, or don't, have a sense of belonging and what, if anything, they might do about it. For example, a young person may have no sense of being wanted or loved by their family but find an identity and a sense of belonging by hanging out with a gang that are habitually violent or racist. What advice would you give to this person? Or again a young person may have no sense of belonging to anything and so proclaim, 'I can do what I like. What I do is nobody else's business!' Or a girl, for example, may have a deep sense of belonging to her family and to her faith community. However, as she matures she finds her father and brothers are intolerant and claim that her faith does not allow her to mix with anyone outside of her family or faith community.

Situations like these are a reality for many young people today. It is because of the reality of these situations that education, particularly religious education, should play its part in helping young people to think about problems of this sort and become clearer in their mind as to what attitude or response they should adopt.

'Who am I?'

There is another sense in which religion and hence religious education is interested in the concepts of identity and belonging. For thousands of years humans have asked themselves questions like, 'Who am I?' and 'Where do I belong?' When these questions were asked people were not looking for terra firma answers to do with nationality or community cohesion. They were asking questions of a cosmic nature. The problem for our ancestors, and it is one which remains with us today, can be put in this form – 'Here I am a creature and yet a thinking, self-conscious creature which I sense is somehow different from the other creatures that live and walk on this planet. As I look out at billions of stars and see a huge universe out there I want to know, 'Who am I?' 'What am I doing here?' 'Why am I alive?' 'Is this where I belong?' 'Is there some other place where I belong?'

An answer to these questions may take the following form – ‘We are of unique concern to God and that our true home, our ultimate destiny, lies in fellowship with God in heaven.’ However, there are other answers which are of a religious and of a non-religious nature in which millions of humans have found a sense of truth and inspiration. Religious education has an important role in exploring with young people these religious and non-religious answers as they are a significant part of what religions teach. When this takes place young people will be *learning about religion*. However, when young people are asked to evaluate the answers they learn about, or are invited to think about and share what they think and so hopefully become a little clearer in their own mind about the sort of answer they would give to these questions, then they are *learning from religion*.

Learning from religion and assessment

Learning from religion can be assessed. When young people are expressing their views on moral issues or on religious truth-claims what can be assessed is:

- the quality of their reasoning
- how well they marshal their arguments
- their recognition of the place of balance and tone in an argument
- how well they understand the nature and complexity of the problem
- what use they make of persuasive principles
- how well they appreciate the consequences of their views
- what use they make of informed evidence
- how well they give clarity to their argument using specific examples
- what use they make of appropriate analogies
- their knowledge of arguments to the contrary
- how effectively they respond to or rebuff arguments to the contrary

The **Impersonal evaluation** of a moral issue or of a religious claim to truth is not in a domain which is mystically subjective or private. Whether something is wrong or is true in the world is an issue about the world. Because of this the question as to whether a person believes something is true or false about the world is open to assessment as to the clarity and cogency of the reasons that person uses to support their belief. Hence, what is being assessed is not the beliefs a young person has but rather the quality of thinking they use which leads them to that belief.

Personal Evaluation and assessment

However, there are aspects of *learning from religion* in which formal assessment is not appropriate. Often when young people are engaged in **personal evaluation** they do have private insight into their own nature and opinions which are not in the public domain and which no other may claim access to and which a young person may legitimately choose not to talk about. For example, if young people are given activities like:

1. Many people have been inspired by the Qur’an
Who or what has inspired you the most? Explain why?’
2. On the cross Jesus forgave those who were putting him to death
Have you ever been forgiven when you did something wrong?
Explain what happened. How did being forgiven feel?
3. In the story the elder brother was envious.
‘Have you ever been envious, perhaps of a friend or a relative?’
Explain what happened. How did you deal with your feelings of envy?

Many young people may find activities which require them to self-examine their feelings and responses rewarding. However, this may not be true of everyone. If a student chooses not to respond, it would not be appropriate to insist that they do so and nothing can be inferred if they refuse to engage in activities of this kind. Even if a young person does respond, the activity does not lend itself to assessment. For example, if a young person, let's call him Duane, undertakes the first activity, 'Who or what has inspired you the most?' and answers it by saying, 'The person who has inspired me the most is Mike Tyson because he frightens his opponents'.

What are we to make of Duane's answer? We might think is it appropriate to suggest to Duane that this is not a very good answer and advise that in order for him to make progress in RE he needs to give answers which show more concern for the feelings of others. We might even be able to put in place a personalised package of RE which gives Duane an opportunity to become familiar with alternative role models. We might provide role-play activities so that Duane becomes more aware of the emotional impact intimidation and the threat of violence may have on a person.

If six months later Duane's answer is now, 'The person who has inspired me most is Mother Teresa because she helped the poor and sick' what are we now meant to make of Duane's answer? Has Duane made any progress in RE? If he has is it permanent progress or can it regress? Has he improved by one level or by two, or three? Or has Duane learnt that in RE it's best not to say what you really think and simply mouth what the teacher wants you to say? Or should we take Duane's change of attitude on face value and say that, based on the latest evidence he has indeed made progress?

Although in religious education, as in all education, we do want the subject to have a formative impact on young person. We do want RE lessons to make a difference to young people's dispositions and attitudes. RE probably does make a difference to how many young people behave and the character and attitudes they show in later life – perhaps not as much as we might hope but it is not unreasonable to believe that RE does make a difference. However, the changes in a young person's dispositions and attitudes cannot form the basis for assessment in RE. Dispositions and attitudes are too easily faked and manufactured. This being the case the danger is that for some young people the lesson they learn from RE is - it pays to be deceptive.

It is because of this that although the activities which support personal development – role-play, drama, conscience alley, circle time, affirmation activities, co-operation exercises, trust games, guided fantasy, hot seating, meeting visiting speakers, voluntary social action, expression through poetry and art – are all important activities which should go on in and outside the RE classroom – these activities and other forms of **personal evaluation** activities, unlike **impersonal evaluation**, are unlikely to lend themselves to formal assessment.

This is not to say that teachers of RE should not be helping young people with their **personal evaluation** and personal development with advice and suggestions. They should! But it does mean that that there is little value in trying to plot degrees of personal development and trying to fix them on an eight level scale.

Formal assessment is possible in *learning from religion* but it is mainly confined to **impersonal evaluation**. When it comes to helping young people with their **personal evaluation** this is best undertaken very cautiously in a more informal setting and often needs to be personalised to suit the circumstances and needs of each individual young person.

How many religions?

To ensure that the legal requirements for religious education are met and that the religious education curriculum is broad and balanced.

- Christianity should be studied in each key stage
- The other principal religions represented in Great Britain which, for the purposes of this agreed syllabus are defined as being Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, should be studied across the Key Stages. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils will have followed a scheme of work which has enabled them to have a broad and secure knowledge and understanding of at least two religious traditions, one of which must be Christianity.

While at least two religions will have been identified for focussed attention, pupils will also have by the end of Key Stage 3 an opportunity to be at least acquainted with four other principal religions. However there is no expectation that these four other religions will have been studied in depth.

Early years Foundation stage & Key Stage 1	Pupils should be introduced to at least two religious traditions, one of which must be Christianity. Pupils may also have an opportunity to be acquainted with usually no more than two other principal religions.
Key Stage 2	Pupils should study at depth at least two religious traditions, one of which must be Christianity. Pupils will also have an opportunity to be acquainted with other principal religions. The expectation is that by the end of Key stage 2 pupils will know about two religions, one of which will be Christianity, quite well and will have, at the very least, encountered the other four principal religions.
Key Stage 3	Pupils should study at depth at least two religious traditions, one of which must be Christianity. Pupils will also have an opportunity to be acquainted with other principal religions.
Key Stage 4	Pupils should study at depth at least two religious traditions, one of which must be Christianity. Alternatively pupils should study a nationally accredited religious education course, for example, a GCSE full or a GCSE short course. Schools may if they wish may begin a nationally accredited course in Y9 and continue with it through into Y10 and Y11. It is a statutory requirement to have an RE provision for all pupils in both Y10 and Y11.
Post 16	At least one religious tradition or a GCSE or AS or an A2 level course.

What religions should be taught?

The agreed syllabus conference acknowledges that the schools within the borough reflect a variety of ethnic, cultural and faith backgrounds. It therefore wishes to allow schools the flexibility to choose which of the principal religions, apart from Christianity, they will teach. The conference recommends, however that the following principles be considered when making this decision:

Relevance

This principle will apply particularly in the primary school, where it is acknowledged as good practice to begin with the experience of the pupils and work gradually outwards. It may therefore be appropriate to select those religions which are strongly represented within the school or its immediate community.

Where no religion other than Christianity is present within the immediate community of the school, schools may wish to choose a religion which is present in the wider community, taking into account other principles listed below.

Continuity

The agreed syllabus conference seeks to preserve the integrity of the principal religions and their faith communities by encouraging continuity in the study of a religion from one key stage to the next. In this way pupils will develop a coherent understanding of at least some of the world's principal religions, while gaining at least some awareness of others. Those religions studied at Key Stage 1 should therefore be continued into Key Stage 2. We recognise the challenge is more difficult at Key Stage 3 where secondary schools receive pupils from a wider range of feeder schools. Clearly, the more liaison between schools, the more effective continuity and progression will be. However, the expectation is that significant ideas and concepts, like worship, symbolism, festival, if learnt about in one religious tradition, provides some help to pupils if asked to learn about another religious tradition.

Relatedness

The relationship of one religion to another should be taken into account when selecting which religions may be studied alongside each other. For example, the study of Islam can inform a study of Christianity, or the study of Hinduism can inform the study of Sikhism.

Impact

The impact of a particular religion in spiritual, moral, social, political, economic and cultural terms within Great Britain and throughout the world, may be a further factor for consideration.

Enrichment

Although it is clearly desirable to begin in the early years of education with the experiences and backgrounds of the pupils, we should also wish to offer to pupils the opportunities to broaden and enrich their understanding by introducing them to religions which previously had not been part of their experience.

Assessment and Progression in RE

In religious education, as in every area of the curriculum, schools should be supporting their pupils and helping them to make progress. The eight level scale below may be used for summative assessment but more importantly it should be used to help schools undertake assessment for learning so that young people gain a clear idea of what they have to do next in RE in order to make progress.

The scale consists of eight level descriptions of increasing difficulty, plus a description for exceptional performance above level 8. Each level description describes the types and range of performance that pupils working at that level should characteristically demonstrate.

Assessing attainment

When deciding on a pupil's level of attainment it is not intended that teachers should break down each level into its constituent elements and then test pupils systematically against each element. The intention is that teachers should use their professional judgement to decide which description best fits the pupil's performance. When doing so, each description should be considered alongside descriptions for adjacent levels. There are no national statutory assessment requirements in religious education, but schools must report to parents on pupils' progress in religious education. Schools that do wish to report to parents using levels must make use of the locally agreed syllabus levels.

The level descriptions provide the basis to make judgements about pupils' performance at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. In Foundation Stage, children's attainment is assessed in relation to the early learning goals. At Key Stage 4, national qualifications are the main means of assessing attainment in religious education.

Teachers should use formal and informal assessment, over a period of time, to gather evidence to form and support their professional judgement about the level of attainment of each pupil. It is unlikely that any one piece of work, task or test is capable of demonstrating that a pupil has attained any level. Certainly, it would be inappropriate to mark pupils' work in terms of it being at any particular level. It is important to note that not all aspects of religious education can be assessed, for example, a pupil may express a personal view which is about themselves. Although such comments are integral to the nature of RE which does encourage young people to self-examine themselves, nevertheless this aspect of RE does not lend itself appropriately for formal assessment.

The key indicators of attainment in religious education are contained in the two attainment targets:

Attainment target 1: Learning *about* religion

Attainment target 2: Learning *from* religion

Expected attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of the Key Stage		Range of levels within which the great majority of pupils are expected to work	
At age 7	2	Key stage 1	1-3
At age 11	4	Key stage 2	2-5
At age 14	5/6	Key stage 3	3-7

Level 1

Attainment target 1

Pupils recall the outlines of religious stories. They recognise features of religious life and practice. They recognise some religious symbols and words.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able to make simple judgements expressing a personal view. They make use of very simple reasons usually expressed in a single clause.

Level 2

Attainment target 1

Pupils retell religious stories. They can identify some features of religious life and can begin to associate them with particular religions. They are able to suggest a meaning for a religious story or action.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able to make simple judgements expressing a personal view. They make use of reasons which are usually in the form of identifying personal consequences or by a simple appeal to authority.

Level 3

Attainment target 1

Pupils are beginning to produce organised descriptions of religious beliefs, teachings and practices. They demonstrate a simple understanding of religious faith often using a single clause response and using generic words like 'holy' or 'special'. Pupils make use of simple specialist vocabulary.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able to express a personal view making use of reasons usually based on social consequences. Evidence to support their ideas is sparse or non-existent.

Level 4

Attainment target 1

Pupils have a rudimentary but reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of two religions one of which must be Christianity. They are acquainted with at least two other religions. They are able to produce organised descriptions of religious life. They also show an elementary knowledge of beliefs or teachings which are specific to particular religions. They demonstrate a simple understanding of religious faith often by linking statements together to provide a coherent account. They make use of specialist religious vocabulary.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able to support an opinion usually making use of relevant reasons. Some of these reasons may not be defensible or clearly distinct from each other. Linkage between statements is often unclear.

Level 5

Attainment target 1

Pupils demonstrate a basic and secure knowledge and understanding of two religions one of which must be Christianity. They are acquainted with at least two other religions. They are able to describe and, using reasons, are able to explain the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings and practices on the lives of believers. They show understanding by making reference to beliefs which are specific to a particular religion. They make use of specialist religious vocabulary and vocabulary specific to particular religions.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able to present defensible reasons in support of an opinion which have to do with a religious or a moral issue. They show some understanding of the complexity of the issues by referring to at least another point of view.

Level 6 (equivalent to GCSE grade C or better)

Attainment target 1

Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of two religions one of which will be Christianity. They are acquainted with at least two other religions. They show a sound knowledge and understanding of religion to describe and explain the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life. They show awareness of the meaning and importance of religious beliefs and practices and can describe the impact these have on the lives of believers. They recognise how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. They communicate their ideas using specialist vocabulary appropriately.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able to use argument supported by relevant evidence to express and evaluate different responses to the religious or moral issues studied. They refer to different points of view in making judgements about these issues.

Level 7 (equivalent to GCSE grade A)

Attainment target 1

Pupils demonstrate a detailed knowledge and a thorough understanding of two religions one of which will be Christianity. They are acquainted with at least two other religions. They show a detailed knowledge and a thorough understanding to describe, explain and analyse the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life. They are able to interpret, draw out and explain the meaning and importance of the beliefs and practices of a religion on the lives of believers. They explain, where appropriate, how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. They understand and use accurately and appropriately a range of specialist vocabulary.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able use reasoned argument supported by a range of evidence to respond to religious beliefs, moral issues and ultimate questions, recognising the complexity of issues. They demonstrate informed insight in evaluating different points of view to reach evidenced judgements about these beliefs

Level 8

Attainment target 1

Pupils demonstrate a very secure, detailed and a very thorough understanding of religion. They are able to describe and give a very thorough explanation and analysis of the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life. They are able to interpret and provide different interpretations and explanations of the meaning and importance of the beliefs and practices religion on the lives of believers. They demonstrate a clear awareness of sometimes, subtle differences of opinion, interpretation and practice within and across religions. They have a mature understanding of why such differences exist and how they may lead to differences of response. They are able to provide a critical analysis of a wide variety of factors including religious factors, which impact on a person's life.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able to use reasoned argument supported by a range of rhetorical techniques and well-informed evidence to respond to religious beliefs, moral issues and ultimate questions. They recognise the ambiguous and complex nature of some issues. They demonstrate informed insight and sensitivity when evaluating different points of view.

Exceptional Performance

Attainment target 1

Pupils have a very secure, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of religion. They demonstrate a highly perceptive insight into the value, purpose and nature of religious faith and commitment. They are able to detect significant and often subtle differences of opinion, interpretation and practice within and across religions. Pupils are able to confidently make apt use of a wide range of specialist vocabulary, which they are able to interpret and explain accurately. They are able to provide a perceptive and sometimes an original insight into how religious faith may impact on a person's life. They independently reach substantiated, sensitive, well-considered conclusions, which often show flair and originality.

Attainment target 2

Pupils are able to marshal ideas and evidence in an independent and often creative way to present persuasive, well-substantiated, balanced and reasoned arguments to respond to religious beliefs, moral issues and ultimate questions. Their arguments are supported by a range of rhetorical techniques and well-informed evidence. They recognise the ambiguous and often highly complex nature of some issues. They demonstrate a sensitive and sometimes an original insight when expressing their own views or when evaluating different points of view.

Exemplification of the levels

Level descriptions rarely provide in words alone the precision or transparency needed to accurately distinguish a level from its adjoining levels. The following exemplification material is provided to help make the distinction between the levels clearer.

Exemplification of standards in attainment target 1

Level 1

attainment target 1

Pupils recall the outlines of religious stories. They recognise features of religious life and practice. They recognise some religious symbols and words.

Pupils at level 1 are able to recall the outlines of religious stories.

Recall of data is limited to factual information. Pupils do not attempt to interpret or explain a ritual or a story although if asked they may volunteer a personal judgement, eg. 'I liked the story because it was nice.'

'Once upon a time there lived Mary but she was going to have a baby.

The Innkeeper let them stay in the stable with the animals. The baby was born.

The wisemen was followed the star to the stable to see the baby king.

The shepherds went to see the new baby king called Jesus.'

Danielle

'Jesus died on the cross. Everyone felt sad.

The guards were guarding the cave where they put Jesus body.

The stone is already rolled away.

Mary found Jesus alive in the garden. I think the angel did it!'

Lewis

Pupils at level 1 recall the outlines of religious stories.

Pupils at level 1 recognise features of religious life and practice

What are the people in the picture doing?

'They are putting lights on the Christmas tree.'

Why is Christmas special?

'At Christmas we remember baby Jesus.'

'At Christmas you get lots of presents.'

Hattie



Level 2

attainment target 1

Pupils retell religious stories. They can identify some features of religious life and can begin to associate them with particular religions. They are able to suggest a meaning for a religious story or action.

Pupils at level 2 can identify features of religious life.

They are beginning to associate features of religious life with particular religions and so are beginning to link words like 'Christians' 'belong to Jesus' and 'Muslims' with particular rituals, stories or actions.

Wudu – water in Islam

'Muslims do their wudu so they are clean to pray to Allah.

Ferst you do your hands. you do your mouth. then you do your nose. then your face. then your arms. then your ear's. then your feet.'

Robert

Pupils at level 2 are beginning to suggest a meaning for a religious story or action.

Their responses may be largely based on recall of what they have been told rather than personal insight.

Pupils often use generic answers like 'it's special', 'it's holy'.

Level 3

attainment target 1

Pupils are beginning to produce organised descriptions of religious beliefs, teachings and practices. They demonstrate a simple understanding of religious faith often using a single clause response and using generic words like 'holy' or 'special'. Pupils make simple use of specialist vocabulary.

Pupils at Level 3 are beginning to produce organised descriptions of religious beliefs, teachings and practices

Pupils at Level 3 are beginning to associate features of religious life with particular religions and so are more secure using words like 'Christians', 'Christianity', 'Muslims' and 'Islam' correctly associating religions with particular rituals, stories or actions.

'The cross reminds people of when Jesus died.

The font is the place where babys are pute in to make them belong to Cristyanity.

Praying maks you talk to god.

The candles is special becose it reminds people he is the light.'

James

Pupils make simple use of specialist vocabulary

Pupils at Level 3 demonstrate a simple understanding of religious faith. If asked they are able to provide more than factual information but are able to suggest a meaning or a purpose behind a religious story or ritual. However pupils responses are often single clause responses using generic words like 'holy' or 'special' or are learnt recall responses, eg 'Jesus is the light of the world'.

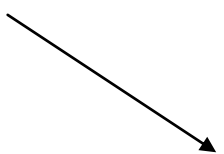


Level 4

attainment target 1

Pupils have a rudimentary but reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of two religions one of which must be Christianity. They are acquainted with at least two other religions. They are able to produce organised descriptions of religious life. They also show an elementary knowledge of beliefs or teachings which are specific to particular religions. They demonstrate a simple understanding of religious faith by linking statements together to provide a coherent account. They make use of specialist religious vocabulary.

Pupils at level 4 are able to show an elementary knowledge of beliefs or teachings which are specific to particular religions.



Pupils at level 4 demonstrate a simple understanding of religious faith by linking statements together to provide a coherent account.

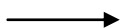


Pupils responses may still however often be learnt recall response rather than the pupil showing any independent, personal insight.

Pupils at level 4 are able to produce organised descriptions of religious life



Pupils at level 4 show an elementary knowledge of beliefs or teachings which are specific to particular religions, eg. 'Jesus becomes present among them'.



How did Jesus describe himself?

What do you think Jesus was saying about himself in each of these extracts?

Extract 1 'I am the bread of life.' John 6:35

'I think it means that Jesus would supply things for people in dark times or in need.'

Central ideas:

'Jesus supporting his followers filling them up providing for them.'

Extract 2 'I am the light of the world.' John 9: 5

'Jesus will guide his followers in the right direction is what I think it means.'

Central ideas

'Showing his followers what God wants for them, showing the way to meet God personally for themselves, goodness in the world.'

Extract 3 'I am the good shepherd.' John 10: 14

'I think it means Jesus watches over people like a shepherd over his sheep.'

Central ideas:

'Providing protection, knowing people as individuals, providing direction and food.'

Jack

Describe Holy Communion and what it means to believers.

'Three other names for Holy Communion are Mass, The Lord's supper and Eucharist. Christians eat bread and red wine, this symbolises Jesus blood and Jesus body. The bread and wine remind Christians of the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples. At the Last Supper Jesus broke up some bread and gave out some wine saying, Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. For the wine Jesus said, Drink this, all of you; for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me, Hymns, prayers, a sermon and a reading from the bible all happen at a Holy Communion. Christians believe that in Holy Communion Jesus becomes present among them. By reliving the events of the Last supper in the special way they become closer to God.'

Sophie

Level 5

attainment target 1

Pupils demonstrate a basic and secure knowledge and understanding of two religions one of which must be Christianity. They are acquainted with at least two other religions. They are able to describe and, using reasons, are able to explain the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings and practices on the lives of believers. They show understanding by making reference to beliefs which are specific to particular religions. They make use of specialist religious vocabulary and vocabulary specific to particular religions

Pupils at level 5 show understanding by making reference to beliefs which are specific to particular religions.

Pupils are increasingly avoiding generic statements like 'it's special', 'it's holy' or 'they feel closer to God' but use statements which contain information which is more specific to the religion being explored.

Pupils at level 5 are able to explain the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings and practises has on the lives of believers. Their work is now usually more than descriptive recall of information.

Pupils at Level 5 are able to explain the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings and practices has on the lives of believers.

Pupils at Level 5 show understanding by making reference to beliefs which are specific to particular religions.

Explain the significance Zakat has for many Muslims

'Zakat means a lot to many Muslims because Muslims believe that Allah controls your successes, how much you earn and how good your job is. Every Muslim believes he or she are part of a big family and if somebody in this 'family' is struggling they help them out by paying Zakat.

By giving some of your savings to charity there may be something that you want but you can't buy it because you may not be able to afford it because you're saving to buy something bigger. In this way of going without it is almost like experiencing the feeling that others less fortunate might have when they would like to buy something.'

Zara

Explain why some Christians have a problem with suffering

'Suffering leads some Christians to doubt their faith in God because they can't understand why God lets suffering occur if he is supposed to care so much about his people. They don't understand why God doesn't do anything about suffering and why if he is all-powerful and all-loving, that he does not prevent evil and does not seem willing to prevent evil. They don't understand why, if God is able to prevent evil, that evil even exists.'

How do some Christians come to terms with suffering?

'Some Christians come to terms with suffering by:

- saying that after death all the suffering of this world will be forgotten in the joy of a new life.
- saying that suffering is caused by sin and sin is an attitude that leads people away from God.
- saying that humans have free will to choose between good and bad and it is not God that causes suffering but human attitudes to life.'

Tyler

Level 6 (equivalent to GCSE grade C or better) attainment target 1
 Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of two religions one of which will be Christianity. They are acquainted with at least two other religions. They show a sound knowledge and understanding of religion to describe and explain the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life. They show awareness of the meaning and importance of religious beliefs and practices and can describe the impact these have on the lives of believers. They recognise how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. They communicate their ideas using specialist vocabulary appropriately.

Pupils at level 6 show a sound knowledge and understanding of religion when describing and explaining the significance and impact of beliefs and teachings have on people. Their work is not just descriptive recall but contains passages which seek to explain, make clearer or provide an interpretation.

Pupils at level 6 recognise how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. Pupils may attempt to explain or make their responses clearer by using examples or supportive evidence.

Explain why some Christians are always opposed to war

‘Some Christians are always opposed to war because in the Bible it says, ‘You shall not kill’. During a war people are killed and injured and so going to war means that you will not keep this commandment. Also Jesus said, ‘If you live by the sword then you will die by the sword.’ By this Jesus meant that if you use a sword it is likely people will use a sword against you and you will be killed. This shows that Jesus thought that using a sword was wrong and so was opposed to war. This is why some Christians are against war because going to war is against what Jesus said.

Some Christians are not always against war. They think that going to war is sometimes the right thing to do in some circumstances. Like going to war against Hitler was the right thing to do because if we hadn’t then Hitler would have taken over this country. War they say is sometimes the right thing to do so that you can stop evil taking over.’

Nathan

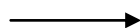


Is war always wrong?

Level 7 (equivalent to GCSE grade A) attainment target 1

Pupils demonstrate a detailed knowledge and a thorough understanding of two religions one of which will be Christianity. They are acquainted with at least two other religions. They show a detailed knowledge and a thorough understanding to describe, explain and analyse the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life. They are able to interpret, draw out and explain the meaning and importance of the beliefs and practices of a religion on the lives of believers. They explain, where appropriate, how differences in belief lead to differences of religious response. They understand and use accurately and appropriately a range of specialist vocabulary.

Pupils at level 7 show a detailed knowledge and a thorough understanding when describing and explaining religious beliefs and teachings



Does God exist? What are some of the arguments for and against the existence of God?

'A strong argument which tries to prove the existence of God is 'Design'. The idea of 'Design' was developed by William Paley, who argued that if you found a watch on the ground, a very quick look at it would show a very complex piece of machinery, which had obviously been carefully designed and put together. A watch of this nature could not exist without a designer. The universe is much more complex than any human-designed invention. Therefore the universe must also have been designed, and the only possible designer for something as complex as the universe is God.

Pupils at level 7 are able where appropriate to explain how differences in belief lead to different responses. Pupil will often explain or make their responses clearer by using well judged examples or supportive evidence



There is also a case against the argument of 'Design'. The world has some 'natural' major faults in its structure and design ie. volcanoes, floods, droughts and earthquakes. These faults raise the question of the existence of God and a more likely explanation of how the world was designed is that the universe is eternal in its own right and exists within a state of growth and change.

Pupils at level 7 do not merely describe a religious belief or teaching. Rather they are able to explain sometimes quite difficult religious beliefs in such a way that the belief is clear and has been well understood.



Another argument which tries to prove the existence of God is the 'Cosmological Argument'. Thomas Aquinas developed this viewpoint – he agreed that it was impossible for the world to come from nothing, therefore it must have existed from something which came long before it. No matter what, there must be a cause which starts everything. Aquinas decided that with the universe the first cause must be eternal – without a beginning or an end – otherwise it would have needed something to bring it to its existence therefore the first cause must be God.

Another theory which tries to prove there is not a God is the theory of 'Evolution'. It was developed by Charles Darwin who was a scientist. His theory is that life has developed and evolved from very simple structures. The process of natural selection, species have adapted to new and changing environmental conditions. Those unable to adapt become extinct.'

Ellie

Level 8

attainment target 1

Pupils demonstrate a very secure, detailed and a very thorough understanding of religion. They are able to describe and give a very thorough explanation and analysis of the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life. They are able to interpret and provide different interpretations and explanations of the meaning and importance of the beliefs and practices religion on the lives of believers.

They demonstrate a clear awareness of sometimes, subtle differences of opinion, interpretation and practice within and across religions. They have a mature understanding of why such differences exist and how they may lead to differences of response. They are able to provide a critical analysis of a wide variety of factors including religious factors, which impact on a person's life.

Pupils at level 8 demonstrate a very secure, detailed and a very thorough understanding of religion when describing, explaining and analysing religious beliefs, teaching and practices



Pupils at level 8 demonstrate an awareness of sometimes, subtle differences of opinion, interpretation and practice within and across religions. They have a good understanding of why such differences exist and how they may lead to differences of response



Euthanasia – what do Christians believe?

‘One of the ten commandments, in Exodus 20 says ‘Do not murder’. Many Christians believe that this commandment applies to euthanasia, because it is killing someone, even if it is yourself. Also in the old Testament in Job 12 it states ‘Everyone’s life is in God’s power’. Many Christians believe that this means you can’t take away a life – only God has the power to do that. Suicide would be taking away God’s sovereignty. 1 Corinthians 10 says ‘I have the strength to face all conditions by the power of God give me’. Many Christians say that this means that you have the strength to face pain, illness and fear, and you shouldn’t want to die.

In the New Testament, in Mark 12, it says ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’. This is saying as well as loving and caring for your friends and family, you need to love and care for yourself too, and so many Christians say that it is not loving to kill yourself.’

On the other hand some Christians do say people have a right to die if they want to. They say that if a person was in extreme pain, and the doctors were sure they would die, isn’t it more humane to put them out of their misery? As Dr Leslie Wetherhead, a methodist minister said ‘those who come after us will wonder why on earth we kept a human being alive against his own will’.

If there is no chance for the person, they should be allowed to die in dignity, as long as they are in a fit state to determine it. The family would not have to suffer, watching a loved one in pain. The Bible says ‘love your neighbour’, so some Christians say that it is not loving to watch someone in pain, when you can help them.’

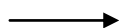
Jamaal

Exceptional performance

attainment target 1

Pupils have a very secure, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of religion. They demonstrate a highly perceptive insight into religious beliefs, teachings, practices and into the nature of religious faith and commitment. They are able to detect significant and often subtle differences of opinion, interpretation and practice within and across religions. Pupils are able to make apt use of a wide range of specialist vocabulary. They are able to interpret and explain religious beliefs and concepts accurately. They are able to provide a perceptive and sometimes an original insight in to how religious faith may impact on a person's life. They independently reach substantiated, sensitive, well-considered conclusions, which often show flair and originality.

Pupils that show exceptional performance have a very secure, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of religion which enables them to show a highly perceptive insight into religious beliefs, teachings, practices and into religious faith and commitment. Frequently pupils will explain or make clear their responses using perceptive and well judged examples.



Pupils that show exceptional performance are able to provide a perceptive and sometimes an original insight into how religious faith may impact on a person's life



Pupils that show exceptional performance are able to independently reach substantiated, sensitive, well considered conclusions, which often show flair and originality



Why should a Christian care about violation of human rights?

'I believe that the principle reason why a Christian should care is the idea of Agape, whereby a person should love their neighbour. Under Christian philosophy all people are brothers and sisters. This means that all people are seen as children of God, as God is seen as Father of all and therefore Christians should care for all. Christians believe that they should love their neighbour and that all people are their neighbour. Under this philosophy a Christian should care not just about human rights violation upon other Christians, or just upon our own family, or just against the British. Christians believe they should care for the pain of Chilean peasants just as much as they care for the pain of their own brothers or sisters.

Christians also believe in the rights of each individual as Christ died for every individual. This means that Christians can not tolerate torture and abuse without feeling this is morally wrong and unacceptable. Many Christians believe that it can never be acceptable to abuse the rights of an individual for the sake of the majority. Each individual's rights are sacred. It may be only one individual in a far of land, only a grain of sand, but it is this individual for whom Jesus gave his life and it is this individual who was created in God's image and it is this individual's rights that have to be respected.

Many Christians believe that no-one should be excluded from the Declaration of Human Rights and this is supported by Pope John XXIII in 1963 in Pacem in Terris. Or as Matthew 5:43-47 and Exodus 23:4-5 state that we should embrace even our enemy. This is why Christians believe that even murderers and rapists must still be given their human rights. Also as believers in honesty Christians believe it is unacceptable that dictators use secrecy, lies and brutality to defend their regimes. Christian philosophy dictates beyond doubt that a Christian should never partake in the violation of human rights.'

Elliot

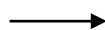
Exemplification of standards in attainment target 2

Level 1

attainment target 2

Pupils are able to make simple judgements expressing a personal view. They make use of very simple reasons usually expressed in a single clause.

Pupils at level 1 attempt to identify reasons but these may often be circular, for example



'It's wrong because you shouldn't do it'
Simon

Pupils at level 1 may not really understand what a reason is so they tend to explain rather than justify, for example



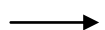
'It's important because it's my religion.'
Lucy

Level 2

attainment target 2

Pupils are able to make simple judgements expressing a personal view. They make use of reasons which are usually in the form of identifying personal consequences or by a simple appeal to authority.

Pupils at level 2 usually see reasons in terms of outcomes which affect them rather than affect others, for example



Why is it wrong to steal?
'Stealing is wrong because you might get found out.'
Nicola

Pupils at level 2 also appeal to an authority as a reason but that authority is usually limited to their own personal experience, for example



'I say my prayers because my Mummy says so.'
Andy



Pupils at level 2 do not attempt to justify the basis of the authority in order to appeal to a wider audience.

Level 3

attainment target 2

Pupils are able to express a personal view making use of reasons usually based on social consequences. Evidence to support their ideas is sparse or non-existent.

Pupils at level 3 are beginning to think more broadly and so make use of reasons which point to outcomes for other people, for example



Why do we need school rules?
'I think we need school rules because everything would get out of control and people would not get enough education.'
Timothy



Pupils at level 3 do not usually provide evidence to support their view. Evidence is sparse or non-existent

Level 4

attainment target 2

Pupils are able to support an opinion making use of relevant reasons. Some of these reasons may not be defensible or clearly distinct from each other. Linkage between statements is often unclear.

Pupils at level 4 often do not give a single reason but rather list reasons believing that by providing more reasons it makes for a stronger argument, for example

There is no linkage joining these reasons together. Instead they stand as isolated single points.

Should we help the poor?

'We should help the poor because they might get hungry. Another reason is they might die. Another reason is that you are doing what God wants you to do. Also there are lots of charities today.'

Alex

Pupils at level 4 amongst defensible reasons also may make use of reasons which may not be defensible, or which lack relevance, or which are not properly developed, for example

Level 5

attainment target 2

Pupils are able to present defensible reasons in support of an opinion which has to do with a religious or a moral issue. They show some understanding of the complexity of the issues by referring to at least another point of view.

Pupils at level 5 still tend to list reasons but their reasons are consistently relevant and defensible, for example,

Pupils at level 5 also refer to another point of view but do not attempt to evaluate or counter a view different from their own, for example

Is there a God?

'I think there must be a God because the world couldn't have happened by chance. Another reason is if there was no God how would we know what was right or wrong? On the other hand some people say if there is a God why do evil things happen?'

Shanaz

Level 6 (equivalent to GCSE grade C or better)

attainment target 2

Pupils are able to use argument supported by relevant evidence to express and evaluate different responses to the religious or moral issues studied. They refer to different points of view in making judgements about these issues.

Pupils at level 6 sustain a structured line of argument through a series of statements. They make use of relevant evidence, for example

Pupils at level 6 refer to at least one point of view different from their own and attempt to evaluate or counter that alternative view, for example

Is paying Zakat a good idea?

'I think paying Zakat is a good idea. Many people can be greedy at times, always wishing for more. People who get Zakat need it much more to pay for bare essentials like clothes and food. They need it more than people who spend it on holidays or on a luxury new kitchen. Some people say charity begins at home but I think it is wrong to turn your back on people who need help.'

Katie

Level 7 (equivalent to GCSE grade A) attainment target 2
 Pupils are able to use reasoned argument supported by a range of evidence to respond to religious beliefs, moral issues and ultimate questions, recognising the complexity of issues. They demonstrate informed insight when evaluating different points of view to reach evidenced judgements about these beliefs, issues and questions.

Pupils at level 7 sustain a clear, cogent and structured line of argument through a series of well linked statements. They make use of a range of relevant evidence which is usually well judged

Pupils at level 7 demonstrate informed insight when evaluating different points of view and are able to provide cogent reasons why they don't agree. Pupils usually maintain a well balanced tone.

There are many beautiful things in the world . Does this show us that there is a God?

'I do not think that beautiful things in the world means that there is a God. I feel like this because not everything is perfectly designed. For example, a deformed baby may give rise to hurt, upset and a difficult life for the child and those who know it. This hardly seems to be the creation of a loving designer God.

Some people feel that there is a God that designed the world. They may believe that there is no other explanation for things such as rainbows, snowflakes and the human eye.

I don't agree with this because the creation of most things can be scientifically explained, such as the rainbow made by water droplets and sunlight. People with these views may also think of God as a designer because they don't like to think that some things may be unexplained. They may feel more secure if they know how things were created.'

Jane

Level 8 attainment target 2
 Pupils are able to use reasoned argument supported by a range of rhetorical techniques and well-informed evidence to respond to religious beliefs, moral issues and ultimate questions. They recognise the ambiguous and complex nature of some issues. They demonstrate informed insight and sensitivity when evaluating different points of view.

Pupils at level 8 sustain a clear, cogent and structured line of argument through a series of well linked statements. They frequently attempt to make their argument more persuasive by making use of techniques like pertinent rhetorical questions and analogies.

Pupils at level 8 recognise the ambiguous and complex nature of some issues. They demonstrate informed insight and sensitivity when evaluating different points of view. They consistently use a reasoned and well balanced tone

Abortion is against the will of God. Do you agree or disagree?

'I do not believe that abortion can always be against the will of God, certainly not against the will of a loving God. What would God say to a woman who was raped and made pregnant? Imagine if that woman chose to have her baby. In most cases that baby would always be a reminder of that terrible rape attack. Her life could become a permanent nightmare. Would a loving God really want that to happen to a woman who was after all innocent?

Some say that the foetus is also innocent and why should it be deprived of life? This is true but we have no right to tell a woman that she must live a life of misery in order that a child she did not want may enjoy its life. A woman has a moral right to decide what to do with her own body. She should be regarded as a free woman and not simply as a container for a foetus whose rights are greater than hers.'

Angela

Exceptional performance

attainment target 2

Pupils are able to marshal ideas and evidence in an independent and often creative way to present persuasive, well-substantiated, balanced and reasoned arguments to respond to religious beliefs, moral issues and ultimate questions. Their arguments are supported by a range of rhetorical techniques and well-informed evidence. They recognise the ambiguous and often highly complex nature of some issues. They demonstrate a sensitive and sometimes an original insight when expressing their own views or when evaluating different points of view.

Pupils that show exceptional performance are able to marshal ideas in an independent and often creative way. →

Pupils that are exceptional performance are able to present persuasive, well-substantiated, balanced and reasoned arguments →

Pupils that are exceptional performance recognise the ambiguous and often highly complex nature of some issues →

Pupils that are exceptional performance demonstrate a sensitive and sometimes an original insight when expressing their own views or when evaluating different points of view →

There is no life after death. Do you agree or disagree?

‘I believe there is a life after death. My reason for doing so is the sense that human life seems so uniquely different from other forms of life. During life we humans seem to be on a sort of journey in which we grow in knowledge but also we can grow morally and spiritually. The idea that with death that journey just comes to an end seems ridiculous to me. Why would human beings be created with the extraordinary qualities that we have if life just ends in nothing? That feeling of unfinished business, a journey not completed, a book in which the final chapter has not been read, forces me to live in the hope and belief that death is not the end.

I know that this is not a proper proof. I do not believe you can prove there is a life after death in the way in which you can prove wood floats or that the angles of a triangle add up to 180°. But there are many things which we cannot prove but which we do not really doubt. I don’t doubt that my best friend really is my friend but I can’t prove it. I don’t doubt that I really enjoy listening to music but I can’t prove that is true. Life after death seems to me to be beyond proof.

Plenty of people do not believe in life after death. They argue that just as the body cells wear out and die so also the brain cells which they say give us our memories and personality must also wear out and die. They may be right and I understand that for some the belief in a life after death might seem like just a foolish hope. But I do not think the crucial part of me has anything to do with my brain cells, or my heart or with any part of my physical body. What makes me the human being I am are my ideas, thoughts, feelings and attitudes and all these things are spiritual things and not physical things. My spiritual self I believe does survive and will continue its journey although my physical body will be left behind.’

Fareed

Performance descriptions

Performance descriptions outline early learning and attainment before level 1 in eight levels from P1 to P8. They may be used with young people who have moderate, or perhaps even severe learning difficulties. They may be used to:

- decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts
- develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long, medium and short-term planning
- track any progress pupils may make towards an agreed syllabus level 1
- identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across their subjects
- record pupils' overall development and achievement, for example, at the end of a year or a key stage

Performance descriptions across subjects

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that some pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate

Level P1 (i)

Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, *for example, startling at sudden noises or movements*. Any participation is fully prompted.

Level P1 (ii)

Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, *for example, becoming still in response to silence. They may give intermittent reactions, for example, vocalising occasionally during group celebrations and acts of worship*

Level P2 (i)

Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, *for example, briefly looking around in unfamiliar natural and man made environments*. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, *for example, leaning towards the source of light, sound or scent. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, for example, touching a range of religious artefacts and found objects in partnership with a member of staff*.

Level P2 (ii)

Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, *for example, showing that they have enjoyed an experience or interaction*. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, *for example, becoming quiet and attentive during a certain piece of music*. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, *for example, repeating a simple action with an artefact*. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, *for example, performing gestures during ritual exchanges with another person performing gestures*.

Level P3 (i)

Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, *for example, prompting a visitor to prolong an interaction*. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, *for example, stroking or shaking artefacts or found objects*. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, *for example, when vocalising in a quiet place*. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, *for example, following a familiar ritual and responding appropriately*.

Level P3 (ii)

Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, *for example, prompting an adult to sing or play a favourite song*. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, *for example, celebrating the achievements of their peers in assembly*. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, *for example, choosing to participate in activities*. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, *for example, contemplating the flickering of a candle flame*. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, *for example, passing an artefact to a peer in order to prompt participation in a group activity*.

Performance descriptions in religious education

From level P4 to P8 it is possible to describe pupils' performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in RE.

Level P4

Pupils use single elements of communication, *for example, words, gestures, signs or symbols*, to express their feelings. They show they understand 'yes' and 'no'. They begin to respond to the feelings of others, *for example, matching their emotions and laughing when another pupil is laughing*. They join in with activities by initiating ritual actions or sounds. They may demonstrate an appreciation of stillness and quietness.

Level P5

Pupils respond appropriately to simple questions about familiar religious events or experiences and communicate simple meanings. They respond to a variety of new religious experiences, *for example, involving music, drama, colour, lights, food or tactile objects*. They take part in activities involving two or three other learners. They may also engage in moments of individual reflection.

Level P6

Pupils express and communicate their feelings in different ways. They respond to others in group situations and cooperate when working in small groups. Pupils listen to, and begin to respond to, familiar religious stories, poems and music, and make their own contribution to celebrations and festivals. They carry out ritualised actions in familiar circumstances. They show concern and sympathy for others in distress, *for example, through gestures, facial expressions or by offering comfort*. They start to be aware of their own influence on events and other people.

Level P7

Pupils listen to and follow religious stories. They communicate their ideas about religion, life events and experiences in simple phrases. They evaluate their own work and behaviour in simple ways, beginning to identify some actions as right or wrong on the basis of the consequences. They evaluate their own work and behaviour in simple ways, beginning to identify some actions as right or wrong on the basis of the consequences. They find out about aspects of religion through stories, music or drama, answer questions and communicate their responses. They may communicate their feelings about what is special to them, *for example, using role play*. They begin to understand that other people have needs and to respect these. They make purposeful relationships with others in group activity.

Level P8

Pupils listen attentively to religious stories or to people talking about religion. They begin to understand that religious and other stories carry moral and religious meaning. They are increasingly able to communicate ideas, feelings or responses to experiences or to retell religious stories. They communicate simple facts about religion and important people in religions. They begin to realise the significance of religious artefacts, symbols and places. They reflect on what makes them happy, sad, excited or lonely. They demonstrate a basic understanding of what is right and wrong in familiar situations. They are often sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and show respect for themselves and others. They treat living things and their environment with care and concern.



They treat living things and their environment with care and concern

Early Years Foundation stage Programme of Study

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) describes the phase of a child's education from birth to the end of reception at the age of five. Religious education is statutory for all children of compulsory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday. Religious education can form a valuable part of the educational experience of all children and although schools are not obliged to provide RE to pupils who are under compulsory school age there are many instances of good practice where it is taught to these pupils.

For this reason the recommendation is that all children attending school should have an opportunity to experience RE. The recommendation is that when RE is taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage it should be taught in a developmentally appropriate way. It should be well thought through and it should adhere to the themes, principles and commitments enshrined in the EYFS.

Religious education in the Early Years Foundation stage should help children to develop empathy, values, and a capacity to make moral judgments and healthy choices. It should also help children to develop an understanding of their own culture and the culture of others. Religious education should also help children to understand cultural diversity, well-being and community cohesion and so contribute to the preparation of children for adult life.

Religious education during the Foundation Stage should be planned using where possible the three prime areas and the four specific areas of learning and development identified in the EYFS.

The three prime areas are:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication and language
- physical development

The four specific areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Religious education can make a valuable contribution to many of these areas particularly, personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, literacy, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

Personal, social and emotional development

During the EYFS religious education can contribute to the personal, social and emotional development of children by providing experiences and support which help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others. The subject may be used to help children to develop social skills and to acquire a positive attitude to learning. It may also be used to support the development of children's emotional well-being and to help them know themselves and what they can do. RE may also play an important role in helping children develop a sense of their own value and an understanding of the need for sensitivity to significant events in their own and other people's lives. It is also important in helping children to form good relationships with others, developing the skills needed to work with and alongside others, in a companionable way.

During the Early Years Foundation stage explicit religious stories and stories which are not explicitly religious may be used to encourage young people to reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They may be used to encourage young people to think about and express their view of the words and actions of characters in the story and decide how they might have felt or responded in a similar situation. Using role-play or guided reflection children might be asked to think about the ways in which people show love, kindness and concern for others and how humans help each other. Stories may be used to stimulate the thought of young children about what is right and wrong and what justification or reasons there are for deciding that something is right or wrong.

Communication and language

Religious education may also help children to become communicators. During RE children may communicate using non-verbal methods like facial expression, eye contact and hand gesture. However, children may also be encouraged to listen and speak so that in RE they may express their view or feelings in response to material of a religious nature, for example, a religious artefact, a story, a piece of music, image or food. A similar expression of their feelings, views and responses, perhaps of a spiritual nature may be stimulated by giving young children an opportunity to encounter objects from the natural world, for example, a leaf, a flower, the bark of a tree, a pebble, a rainbow or a butterfly. By doing so the vocabulary of young people may be extended so that they become familiar with some basic religious vocabulary. Young children may also become acquainted with some of the language and basic grammar that may be used to express emotion, values, reasons and personal views. They begin to acquire the language used for thinking, for example the words used to express feelings, ideas, values, likes and dislikes

Literacy

Religious education may contribute to the development of literacy by giving children opportunities to handle books which contain stories associated with particular religions, or handle books which contain information about religion. Religious stories may be read to children using puppets, soft toys, or real objects as props, for example, a crib when telling the story of the birth of Jesus, or a statue of Hanuman they are being told the story of Rama and Sita. Children may also be permitted to handle sacred books. However, this should be undertaken with care, and with the intention of helping children understand the importance of showing respect towards an object which is deeply respected by others. Children can be encouraged to suggest what happens next or how a religious story might end. While reading a story the teacher might pause and encourage a child to 'read' the next word.

Understanding of the world

This area of learning engages children in an investigation of objects and materials and their properties. Children learn about change and pattern, about similarities and differences. They begin to question how and why things work. Children also learn about the world in relationship to time so they find out about past and present events relevant to their own lives or those of their families. They become aware of and interested in the natural world. They find out about their local area and learn about what they like and dislike about it. Children are also beginning to know about their own culture and about the culture of others in order to understand and celebrate the similarities and differences that exist in a diverse society.

Children may be encouraged to learn about explicit and very concrete examples of religious life and behaviour in the world, for example, churches, mosques, temples, holy books, prayer beads, food associated with religion and religious symbols. Children should be encouraged to notice and be curious about such objects in their immediate neighbourhood and in the larger world. Young children's natural curiosity and desire to know should be encouraged by providing opportunities to visit places of worship and to learn about festivals, clothes, symbols, special ceremonies, rituals and other forms of religious expression. Young children should be encouraged to ask questions and to learn about religion which is of a direct factual nature, e.g. 'What is it called?' 'Where is it?' Young children should also be introduced to asking questions and learning answers which require a level of understanding and insight, e.g. 'Why do you do that?' 'What makes it special?'

Expressive Arts and Design

Expressive arts and design has to do particularly with responding to experiences, expressing oneself and communicating ideas. Children respond in a variety of ways to what they encounter through what they see, hear, smell, taste or touch. As a result of these encounters children may express and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings in a wide variety of ways. This means that in RE young children should be introduced to ways in which religious life and belief may be expressed in creative and imaginative ways, for example, through song, music, dance, play and art. They should be given opportunities to learn and be encouraged to express their experiences and feelings in ways which are imaginative and creative drawing upon a large range of senses like touching, smelling, hearing and tasting. Young children should be encouraged to use their imagination when learning about religion in the world by inventing stories, situations, role-play, dance and designs of their own. To be creative such work should not simply be different but should be genuinely expressive and respectful of the views of others.

example 1



The lost sheep

Children are introduced to the story of the 'Lost Sheep' (see Luke 15: 4-7). The teacher makes use of a familiar figure to the children, Mickey the monkey, a hand puppet who is often used for storytelling. All the children sit together on the 'story mat'.



The children might be told that they are going to learn about a story told by a very famous man called Jesus. The children might be questioned – 'Who has heard of Jesus before?' The knowledge the children have of Jesus, if any, might be shared. The idea of Jesus being a very special person might also be explored and supported by showing and passing around for the children to carefully handle a small statue of Jesus.

The children are invited to listen very carefully to the story and to think of a really good question they would like to ask after the story is over. The teacher switches on the story light which is a small multi-coloured LED lamp which marks the beginning of the story and the class's entry into story time. Mickey tells the story of the 'Lost Sheep'. This may be supported by images (see for example, 'Stories Jesus Told' by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen). The story is told with frequent pauses and questions, 'Where do you think the sheep has gone?' 'What do you think the farmer will do?' 'Do you think he will give up?'

When the story has been completed they are invited to ask any questions they have about the story. The teacher might ask the question, 'Did you like the story?' and perhaps encourage the children to talk freely about likes and dislikes, being kind, thinking of others, being sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.

Are you kind to others?



example 2

Exploring a religious symbol – Diva (Diyas lamp)



Divya lamps are particularly associated with Hinduism. They are small lamps, usually filled with oil although night candles are also often used. In Hinduism they are used as part of the celebration of Divali. They are lit to symbolise the hope that Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of good fortune will find her way into people's homes. The festival also celebrates the legend of Rama and Sita's homecoming to Rama's kingdom, Ayodhya. After fourteen years of exile the people of Ayodhya placed hundreds of divya lamps around their homes, in courtyards, gardens and on roof tops to celebrate Rama and Sita's return.

The children might be told that they are going to be shown something which is very special to many people. Several examples of divya lamps are shown to the children. These are passed around for the children to look at closely and to handle. The children are encouraged to wonder - 'What are they?' 'What are they used for?' 'Who would use them?'

Show the children a collection of candles including night lights, decorative candles, church candles, birthday candles. Arrange these as a small display or together in a special basket or box. Encourage the children to look at, handle and explore the candles. Ensure that every child has the opportunity and time to handle and explore the candles together without a long wait.

Encourage the children to talk about the candles, e.g. 'Where have they seen them before?' 'Where or when are they used?' 'What are they used for?' Leave the candles available so that the children can revisit them in small informal groups to continue to handle, explore and talk about the candles.

Further learning opportunities might include:

- discussions about celebrations and what happens when people celebrate, e.g. special clothes, food, presents, cards.
- opportunities for children to bring in and share photographs of celebrations they have taken part in to talk about and share with others.
- opportunities for children to bring in clothes and artefacts from celebrations to show and talk about, e.g. birthday cards, baptismal candles, brides maids dress, Eid cards, etc.
- look at, handle and explore other artefacts and/or pictures connected to Divali celebrations.
- talk about the special foods eaten at parties and various celebrations. Groups of children could make some food to share with others as part of a celebration.
- tell the story of Rama and Sita, using a book, pictures and/or props. e.g. puppets, or masks of Ravana, Rama, Hanuman
- listen to music from the Asian culture and move spontaneously to the music to create dances
- look at a variety of Divali cards and rangoli patterns and have the opportunity to use a variety of creative materials to create their own.
- have the opportunity to cook Asia food such as vegetable curry, make dips to eat with vegetable sticks, chapatti or naan bread. Make drinks such as lassi. Perhaps inviting a parent in to cook.

Key Stage 1 Programme of Study

Summary statement

This page contains a summary of the core knowledge and skills which should be taught and of the requirements which should be kept in mind when planning and delivering Key Stage 1 religious education. The following pages 45-53 contain additional information on what to do and how to plan a Key Stage 1 religious education scheme of work.

Key Stage 1 Core knowledge and skills

- (1) young children should explore both implicit and explicit religious material
- (2) Christianity in Key Stage 1 and in every Key Stage must be taught
- (3) at least one principal religion other than Christianity must be taught
- (4) material about a third or a fourth principal religion may also be taught
- (5) sound quality of learning is more desirable than insecure quantity of learning
- (6) depth knowledge into *why* a religious practice or belief is important should be explored and not just horizontal knowledge about the how, who, what and when
- (7) young children should be encouraged to talk and share their thoughts and views about the religious material that they learn about
- (8) young children should be encouraged to explain or attempt to give reasons to support their views

In addition to these eight points the core knowledge which should be taught during Key Stage 1 may be expressed using six headings which are: stories, artefacts, places of worship, festivals, prayer and beliefs. These six headings should not be seen as topic titles which may be taught independent of each other. When enquiring into a religious story, religious beliefs which the story gives expression to, must also be explored. When enquiring into prayer it is likely that artefacts which serve as aids to worship and prayer will also be explored.

Core knowledge should not be thought of as meaning merely information. Part of core knowledge every child should be acquiring in every key stage is beginning to make the attempt to develop the core skill of thinking about their own values and beliefs and attempting to make clear the grounds or reasons on which their emerging values and beliefs are based.

Finally, a core knowledge statement is a statement about what should be taught. It is not a statement about everything that may be included in an RE Key Stage 1 scheme of work. The core is the essential minimum which should be manageable given the time schools should allocate to the teaching of RE. If schools believe they can do more, perhaps a good deal more in RE, keeping to the educational principles enshrined in the agreed syllabus this would be highly desirable.

Key stage 1 Programme of Study

Implicit and explicit RE

Key Stage 1 should build on children's growing awareness of religion and religious life which they experienced in the Foundation Stage. Much of this should continue to be an attempt to encourage children to be curious about concrete examples of religious life and behaviour, for example, religious stories, artefacts, places of worship, festivals, prayer and beliefs. This is often called **explicit religious education**. Explicit religious education has largely to do with the growth in knowledge and understanding of organised religions like Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, etc.

Horizontal knowledge and vertical knowledge

Engaging with material which has to do with organised religion often raises many questions. The ability to answer such questions has partly to do with knowledge about *how*, *who*, *what* and *when* certain things are undertaken or believed, in an organised religion. This sort of knowledge might be called **horizontal knowledge**. However the gaining of horizontal knowledge alone is not all that is required at Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1 a conscious effort should be made to help young children become curious about *why* certain things are believed or undertaken in a specific religion. For example, a feature of Christianity which young children in Key Stage 1 might learn about is that many parents will have their infant children baptised. In Key Stage 1 young children should be encouraged to be curious not only about *what* happens when a baby is baptised. They should be encouraged to begin to be curious about *why* Mums and Dads want their baby to be baptised. (see p.7). 'Why do many Mums and Dads have their babies baptised?' is a question about a religion and to begin to offer an answer the child needs to acquire **vertical knowledge**. That is they need to show insight into what is going on not only on the outside but also, as it were, inside the hearts and minds of Mums and Dads that want to have their babies baptised. They need to show increasing depth of understanding into what it is that gives rise to religious behaviour and the desire to live a religious life.

Helping young children to begin to be curious about the organised religions and to develop their answers in response to *why* questions so that their answers show an increasing insight into religious life and behaviour associated with the organised religions is an important part of making progress in RE. It begins not in Key Stage 3 but has its roots in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress in RE is not just about more horizontal knowledge about particular religions. It is also about increasing vertical knowledge so that children demonstrate an increasing depth of understanding into particular religious traditions.

Implicit religious education

There is also another important aspect to RE which is often called **implicit religious education**. This has to do with the questions, emotions and feelings that arise from our experience of being alive, of the natural world and from our relationship with each other. For example, our experience on seeing a beautiful view as we look across a country valley, or what questions we begin to wonder about when we examine the detailed pattern on a leaf, or what things we might marvel over when we see a seed grow into a plant, or what questions we may ask ourselves when our pet dog dies or when we look at the stars at night. All of these experiences and questions are also an important part of what should be explored in RE in Key Stage 1.

Implicit religious education also has to do with our relationship with other people and with other living creatures. For example, how we feel and how we think we should respond when we see a person who is hurt, or upset or is lonely, or when we notice an animal that is in pain, or is being badly treated. Should we help? Do we have a responsibility to help? Why do relationships bring laughter and joy? Why are they sometimes the cause of pain and disappointment? Why are some people so cruel? Why do people go away? Why did my gran die?

All of these experiences of life raise religious questions. These questions are not so much questions about organised religion. For example, 'Why do many Mums and Dads have their babies baptised?' is a question **about a religion**. It is a question about an organised religion - Christianity. However, our actual experience of being alive raises **religious questions**. For example, 'Why am I alive?' is a *religious question* but it is not a question about an organised religion. It is a generic *religious question*. The distinction between questions which are *about a religion* and generic *religious questions* is important because both sorts of questions are an important feature of good RE in all Key Stages.

When young children are involved in activities which are of an implicit religious educational nature, if we teach in a way which encourages questions, they can often surprise us with the generic *religious questions* they ask. For this reason teachers should deliberately plan to use strategies associated with implicit religious education as part of their Key Stage 1 scheme of work. A nature trail with a class of young children may be planned as a lesson in botany but it may also be deliberately planned with the intention of encouraging children to raise religious questions, to suggest their own answers and to encourage them to explore their thinking. The growing of watercress in the classroom may be part of a science project. However, it may also be part of a deliberately planned RE topic involving the children in exploring the question, 'Are there signs of God? Observing over several weeks the growth of a plant from a seed into a living organism strikes many as being something that is both mysterious and wonderful. For many getting to the bottom of the mystery of what is going on when we see a seed transformed into organic life requires an answer which involves something more than a photochemical reaction involving water, light and carbon.

The explicit exploration of religion

In addition to planned implicit religious education, a good deal of a Key Stage 1 scheme of work should include explicit religious education - that is an explicit exploration of particular religions. This involves engaging children with material associated with some of the principal religious traditions, for example, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, Hinduism.

Christianity and at least one other principal religion

The explicit exploration of religion during Key Stage 1 must explore Christianity and at least one other principal religion. When thinking about this requirement each school should bear in mind that by the end of Key Stage 2 the expectation is that most pupils will achieve a level 4. Level 4 requires that 'pupils have a rudimentary but reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of two religions one of which must be Christianity.' (see levels p.19). For that reason it is recommended that schools begin their exploration of another principal religion early so that in addition to learning about Christianity the second principal religion being explored is an important part of every school's Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 RE scheme of work.

Every school should be very clear about what religion in addition to Christianity children in their school will have a 'reasonably secure knowledge and understanding' of by the end of Key Stage 2. In other words part of the aim of each school's scheme of work is to ensure that by the end of Key Stage 2 every child will have a reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of perhaps Christianity and Islam, or Christianity and Sikhism, or Christianity and Hinduism, etc. The choice of the second religion to be focussed on is up to the school. 'Relevance' that is choosing a religion which is 'strongly represented within the school or its immediate community' (see p.18) is an important factor as are other factors but the choice as to what that second principal religion should be is one each school should very consciously take.

Quality not quantity

It is important in Key Stage 1 not to introduce the children to too much information about too many religions. For example, it may be thought appropriate to plan a six week topic called '*Festivals of Light*' with one lesson devoted to Christmas, a second lesson about Divali, a third about Hanukkah, a fourth about Wesak, a fifth about Id-ul-Fitr and a sixth about the Sikh festival of Bandi Chhorh Divas. However, the reality is the attempt to teach a little bit about each religion so quickly, whether the topic is about festivals of light, or places of worship, or leaders of religion or holy books, is likely to lead to confusion. Children are unlikely to retain so much information and what information they do gain about one religion is likely to be jumbled with that of another. Secure quality learning about a limited number of religions is an important consideration here rather than quantity of information about lots of religions which is insecure and poorly understood.

A topic about festivals of light is possible but better learning outcomes are more likely if topics are confined to an exploration of only one or perhaps only two religions. This might mean, for example, three lessons might be set aside for exploring the Hindu celebration of Divali and three lessons might be reserved for exploring the Christian celebration of Christmas. This would give time for the pupils to explore more fully both festivals, so that the forms of celebration used in both religions could be looked into and could be considered more carefully. The special stories told as part of the celebration could be thought about and ideas exchanged about what they might mean or what might be learnt from these stories. The values and beliefs that are being affirmed, in other words *why* these festivals are being celebrated by both religions could also be considered and opportunity made available for a sharing of views about those values and beliefs.

Learning from religion

When planning RE in all Key Stages it is important to remember that children and young people are not buckets and when teaching RE the job of a teacher is not to simply fill children up with information about religion. RE requires giving time and opportunity for children and young people to dwell and think about the information they encounter and give consideration to the religious material they are being invited to learn about and engage with. Giving time to and opportunity to children to dwell and think and share their views is a vital part of RE. Encouraging young children into thinking about why they think as they do, that is acquiring the habit and the skill of giving reasons, if they can, which support their views is an essential part of RE in all Key Stages. Time spent in this way provides an opportunity for young people to be engaged in personal growth and development – in other words it is an opportunity for young children to learn from the religious material they encounter. Without this engagement with the religious material the quality of learning about religion is

invariably poor and unsatisfactory. Unless the religious material means something to the pupil and is seen to have relevance to their lives in forming, perhaps in contradiction to, their own values and belief, there is little reason why young people should wish to invest much energy in trying to retain it.

Other principal religions

In addition to a focussed attention on Christianity and at least one other principal religion during Key Stage 1 pupils should also be introduced to a third and may be even a fourth principal religion. There is no expectation that these additional religions will be as well-known, or as well understood, as children will know or understand Christianity and the second principal religion the school has chosen to focus on. What is required in Key Stage 1 is some secure quality learning about two religions while clearly acknowledging and bringing to the children's attention other principal religions as well.

Key Stage 1 What should be taught

Core knowledge and skills

stories

Pupils should learn about Christian stories that are in the Bible, for example, stories like: the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the Pharisee and the tax-collector and the Good Samaritan. Opportunities should be taken to encourage enquiry into how these stories may be interpreted and what values and beliefs they may be expressing. Pupils should similarly learn about stories associated with at least one other religious tradition. They should enquire into what values, beliefs or meaning these stories may also be expressing. Pupils should be encouraged to share their views and thoughts in response to any message or moral these stories may give expression to and begin to make the attempt to explain or support their views making use of simple reasons.

artefacts

Pupils should be taught to recognise Christian artefacts, for example, the cross, the Bible, images of Jesus and artefacts associated with Christmas and Easter, for example, a manger scene, an Easter egg. Pupils should explore how and when such artefacts may be used and why they are of religious importance to Christians. Pupils should similarly explore artefacts associated with at least one other religious tradition. Opportunities should be taken to encourage pupils to ask questions about the values or beliefs these artefacts may represent or express. They should also be encouraged to share their views and thoughts in response to any message or beliefs these artefacts may express and begin to make the attempt to explain or support their views making use of simple reasons.

places of worship

Pupils should learn about the church as a place used for Christian worship. If possible pupils should have an opportunity to visit a local church. They should be encouraged to explore the atmosphere in a church, how and why Christians worship together and how and why special events like baptism are celebrated in a church. They should be taught to recognise features found in churches like a cross, images of Jesus, the font, the altar and the lectern. Pupils should be taught how at least one of these features may be used and should explore why it is religiously important.

Pupils should also explore a place of worship associated with at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts in response to views and beliefs which arise from their exploration into places of worship and begin to attempt to explain or support their view making use of simple reasons.

festivals

Pupils should be taught about the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. They should be taught the outline of the Christmas and the Easter story and explore what these stories suggest, mean or give expression to. They should learn about some of the traditions, symbols, special food and beliefs associated with these two festivals. Pupils should also explore at least one festival which is celebrated by at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to attempt to share their thoughts and views in response to any beliefs or values a festival they have explored may suggest. They should be encouraged to explain or support their view making use of simple reasons.

prayer

Pupils should be taught about Christian prayer. Pupils should learn about different types of prayer, for example, praising (devotional) prayer, asking (petitionary) prayer, and how music or song may be used in Christian prayer. Pupils should be encouraged to be curious and to raise questions of their own about prayer. Pupils should also explore prayer in at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to attempt to share their thoughts and views in response to their enquiry into prayer. They should be encouraged to explain or support their view making use of simple reasons.

beliefs

Pupils should learn about some important Christian beliefs, for example, God, Jesus, the resurrection, forgiveness, kindness, concern for the rejected and prayer. Pupils should enquire into how religious faith may influence the lives of people, who may live in the local community, and who may act in ways which show forgiveness or kindness to others. Pupils should be encouraged to attempt to share their thoughts and views in response to how faith may influence how a person chooses to live. They should be encouraged to explain or support their views making use of simple reasons.

Avoid confusing religions

Schools are advised to make use of strategies which help young children to mentally organise the information they gain in RE. A deliberate effort should be made to help children avoid confusing one religion with another. This means that when young children explore, for example, a story associated with the Prophet Muhammad, or enquire into a festival like Purim, or visit a mandir, repeated efforts are made to make sure they understand and know the name of the principal religion they are currently actually learning about. In addition to the gaining of new and sound learning about a particular religion a real effort should be made to help the children link the new learning they gain with any previous learning they may have which is associated with the same religion. In this way there is a build-up of information, knowledge and understanding about each religion. Young children shouldn't be encouraged, like frogs, to simply hop from one religion to another, or from one RE topic to another. This means, for example, young children should be helped to understand that the story about Muhammad helping a stranger which they learnt about in the Autumn term does have a connection with their enquiry into Islamic prayer which they will undertake in the Summer term.

Colour code

One way of helping children to organise the information they gain about religion is to colour code each religion. For example, blue might be used for Christianity so artefacts, pictures, stories, photographs and information associated with Christianity may be placed in a blue area of the classroom. In this area blue freeze paper may be used to cover a display board and a blue tablecloth may be placed over a table on which are placed books, artefacts, images, models, etc., associated with Christianity.

In another part of the classroom similar material about Sikhism may be located. In this area orange freeze paper may be used to cover a display board and a table with an orange table cloth may be used on which are placed Sikh artefacts or may be books about Sikhism. The colour green might be used to denote Islam. Red may be used for Hinduism, yellow for Buddhism and pale blue for Judaism. These colours may be used consistently throughout the child's time in the school and continued into secondary education.

Proper nouns

Another strategy schools should use is to make a real effort in KS1 to help children become familiar with the names of religions, that is the proper naming nouns used to refer to particular religions. In other words children should not merely learn that chocolate eggs may be eaten at Easter and *why* Easter is celebrated. They should learn that Easter is a *Christian* festival. Similarly children should be encouraged to not merely be able to recall the story of Rama and Sita and suggest what message or meaning may lie behind the story but they should also learn that this story is associated with the *Hindu* tradition.

Trigger artefacts

In addition to colour coding each religion and encouraging the accurate learning of the proper names used to refer to religions, familiar trigger artefacts associated with a particular religion might be used to help learning. Trigger artefacts are used when a new topic is introduced. For example, at the beginning of a new topic the aim of which is to explore an aspect of Christianity, for example Christian prayer, three Christian trigger artefacts, perhaps a small freestanding wooden cross, a statue of Jesus and a photograph of a local church, might be shown and discussed with the children. As part of the colour coding method a blue tablecloth on which the three artefacts are placed may also be used.

These same three trigger artefacts may have been used some months earlier when the same class began a topic exploring stories Jesus told. The same three trigger artefacts may be used again when the class move on later in the year to a topic on Easter.

The reason for doing this is to help the children understand that the new topic they are about to begin is not totally disconnected from what they have previously learnt in other topics. All of these topics are about the same religion – Christianity. The three artefacts trigger as it were familiar mental pathways which lead to information and ideas associated with Christianity. This helps the child to understand that new information which they are now about to gain about Christianity should also be filed in the same mental space. In other words the teacher is very deliberately helping children to mentally organise the information they acquire about the different religions in such a way that it has some chance of being remembered and understood. By doing so young children are being helped to understand that information they are exploring is connected and is about the same religion.

In the case of Islam the trigger artefacts may be a set of prayer beads, a small pocket edition of the Qur'an and a photograph of a mosque. These trigger items, together with the colour green are used whenever a topic exploring Islam is introduced. In this way a school's RE scheme of work attempts to build up and provide an increasingly detailed body of knowledge and depth of understanding about each religion that pupils are taught about. Information about each religion is properly placed in each child's correct mental space so that, it is hoped, information, beliefs and ideas associated with each religion is not just jumbled up and confused with other religions.

An enquiry based approach

Traditionally RE topic titles have tended to suggest that there was a distinctive religious content to be taught. That content is nearly always identified as a body of information about an organised religion or it is about several organised religions. For example, a topic like, 'Special Buildings', might suggest a series of lessons about different places of worship. In the absence of anything to indicate otherwise the lessons might be thought to be effective if they helped young children learn about the layout and furniture that is typically seen in various buildings like a church, a mosque, or a gurdwara. Having completed the topic an important indicator of progress, it might be thought, would be that children should be seen to have gained knowledge about the layout and furniture usually found in these three buildings. In other words, a child might be said to have made progress if they could identify and describe the font, the lectern, the altar; the mihrab, the minaret, the dome, the takht, the palki and the langar.

Similarly, if the topic title was called, 'Stories Jesus Told' the expectation might be that young children would learn about three or four stories that Jesus told. For example, they might be told the story of the lost sheep (Matt 18 v 12-14, Lk 15 v 3-7), the prodigal son (Lk 15 v 11-32), and the pharisee and the tax collector (Lk 18 v 9-14). Having been taught the topic an important indicator of progress would be that the children would be able recall those stories.

Knowledge in RE is important and should not be dismissed. Nevertheless, if the impression we give young children is that RE is mainly about acquiring knowledge about the religions we are in danger of failing to effectively challenge young people and of failing to set them on the right road of understanding what RE is about. This is particularly true for children who do not identify themselves with an organised religion. If the subject appears to be mainly to do with knowledge about the religions why should the subject be of any great interest to them?

Ofsted's 2006 – 2009 report on RE called, '*Transforming religious education*' draws attention to this issue. It claims that in many primary RE lessons rather than probing into the religious material itself to encourage independent thought and reflection, teachers introduced challenge by asking children to undertake activities which were of a practical or of an artistic kind. A typical example of this which Ofsted describes is a Y2 lesson. After hearing about the story of Rama and Sita the class were divided into four groups and each group worked on a separate task. One group were asked to produce a short play based on the story. The second group were asked to create a poster about one of the key characters in the story. The third group were asked to use pictures with speech bubbles to sequence the events and the fourth group were asked to develop a simple celebratory dance, using Indian music.

All of these activities are essentially about recalling the story of Rama and Sita. Ofsted commented that the children participated well. They enjoyed the activities and used a variety of creative skills.

However, these skills were developed at the expense of RE-related learning. This was because the teacher did not ensure that the pupils focused on a question or task which encouraged independent thought and reflection about the religious material they were engaging with. How might the lessons have been improved? The teacher would have had a better chance of ensuring RE-related learning if, from the beginning, the children had been clear about what the key RE question was that they would be exploring, if they had kept that key question clearly in mind as the lessons proceeded and if they had encouraged the children to try and answer it.

What sort of key question might have been used? A good key question might have been, 'Who are Rama and Sita?' This question might have formed the title of the topic. By doing so, and by constantly bearing this question in mind when thinking about the activities and tasks the children would have been much more likely to have made progress in understanding who exactly Rama and Sita are and why they are so revered within the Hindu tradition. If such a title had been used it is much more likely that the children would have been directed not so much towards merely recalling the story but rather they would have spent more time on the much more challenging task of thinking about what the story of Rama and Sita may be about or what the story may be trying to tell us. The children may have been directed into thinking about 'Is there a message inside this story which makes it so important to Hindus?' or 'Is there a message can I get from this story which speaks to me or is of value to me?'

It is not expected that young children will give brilliantly, well informed answers but encouraging young children into adopting the mental habit of looking beyond the literal story, ritual or ceremony and asking more challenging questions about its meaning or purpose is fundamental to what it means to make progress in RE. In the case of Rama and Sita ideas that the story that may be suggesting might be:

- the theme of courage and loyalty
- not giving into evil but standing up for what is good
- accepting misfortune with good grace
- being an honourable person
- Who is Rama? Rama is a human prince but Rama in the Hindu tradition is also the god Vishnu. He is an avatar of Vishnu the preserver who visits earth to make sure that evil is overcome and that the good survives. Hence there is the strong suggestion that Rama and Sita are divine or perfect role models for human life.

The enquiry based approach avoids blatantly telling young children, '*This is what the story means*'. As an enquiry the teacher encourages questions, suggests questions, encourages children to share ideas, may give hints, or may offer possibilities. Various classroom strategies can be used which support the enquiry based approach and avoid being simply didactic, for example:

- circle time and community of enquiry to encourage discussion
- thinking time and snowballing ideas to generate good questions
- diamond nine, pyramid, mystery activities and using provocative images to suggest possibilities
- role-play and guided fantasy to enter emotionally into stories and rituals

Essentially the children should be involved in a journey of discovery where the answer is not a given and where they have to do the thinking. They have to become familiar with the idea that often in RE they have to solve the mystery and asking the teacher doesn't really provide an answer.

Enquiry based KS1 topics

Examples of possible KS1 enquiry topics are:

- Harvest – why do people give thanks?
- Why is Christmas celebrated?
- Why is Purim celebrated?
- Are there signs of God?
- What is a good friend?
- What was Muhammad like?
- Who are Rama and Sita?
- Why did Jesus tell these stories?
- Why is Easter so important?
- Why do people pray?
- What did Jesus teach?
- Why are babies baptised?

These enquiry topics are not a list of topics that must be taught in Key Stage 1. They are examples of topic titles schools may find helpful. Some of these topics clearly concentrate on only one religion. For example, 'Why did Jesus tell these stories?' is clearly a topic which is focussed on Christianity. Other topics however may involve an enquiry into two religions. For example, 'Are there signs of God?' and 'Why do people pray?' may involve the pupils enquiring into two religions like Christianity and Islam.



Inside Birmingham's Progressive synagogue.
Why do people pray?

Key stage 2 Programme of Study

Summary statement

This page contains a summary of the core knowledge and skills which should be taught and of the requirements which should be kept in mind when planning and delivering Key Stage 2 religious education. The following pages 54-65 contain additional information on what to do and how to plan a Key Stage 2 religious education scheme of work.

Key Stage 2 Core knowledge and skills

- (1) during Key Stage 2 pupils must explore Christianity and at least one other principal religion.
- (2) pupils' knowledge of Christianity and of a second religion should be extended and deepened with the intention of ensuring that pupils have knowledge of Christianity and of at least one other principal religion which is reasonably deep and secure.
- (3) over the course of the six years of primary education pupils should have had some engagement with the four other principal religious traditions.
- (4) pupils should become familiar with the idea that religious words and actions may be intended to be interpreted metaphorically or may have a symbolic or a non-literal meaning.
- (5) pupils should gain a more specific and nuanced understanding of why, beyond a generic explanation, certain religious rituals and ceremonies often have a high status and importance within particular faiths.
- (6) pupils should be permitted and encouraged to raise questions which are important to them about the truth and worth of the religious material they learn about.
- (7) pupils should be encouraged to express their own views in response to the religious material they learn about and should be encouraged to support their views using relevant reasons which are clear and cogent.

The core knowledge of what should be taught in Key Stage 2 may be usefully expressed using seven headings which are: stories, worship, festivals, leaders of religion, holy books, people of faith and beliefs. These headings should not be seen as topic titles which may be taught independent of each other. When enquiring into worship it is very likely that important beliefs will also be explored. When exploring festivals it would be a mistake not to make children aware of significant religious stories associated with the festival.

Core knowledge should not be thought of as meaning literally only knowledge. Part of the core knowledge every child should be acquiring in Key Stage 2 is the ability to think about and articulate their own response to the religious material they learn about and to form their own values and beliefs. They should be helped to make clear how they might give grounds or reasons which support their values and beliefs which are relevant and cogent.

Finally, this summary statement about core knowledge is about what must be taught during Key Stage 2. It is not a statement about everything that may be included in a Key Stage 2 RE scheme of work. The core is the essential minimum which should be manageable given the time schools should allocate to the teaching of RE. If schools believe they can do more, keeping to the educational principles enshrined in the agreed syllabus this would be highly desirable.

Key stage 2 Programme of Study

In Key Stage 2 pupils should build on the knowledge and skills which they gained in Key Stage 1. In order to teach RE effectively in Key Stage 2 teachers should be familiar with the Key Stage 1 programme of study (see p.42-51). A great deal of the information and advice found in those pages is relevant to the effective teaching of RE in Key Stage 2.

Christianity and at least one other principal religion

During Key Stage 2 pupils must explore Christianity and at least one other principal religion. When thinking about this requirement each school should bear in mind that by the end of Key Stage 2 the expectation is that most pupils will achieve a level 4. This level requires that 'pupils have a rudimentary but reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of two religions one of which must be Christianity'. (see levels p.19). For that reason it is recommended that schools begin their exploration of a clearly identified second religion in addition to Christianity in Key Stage 1 and continue to both extend and deepen pupil's knowledge of those two clearly identified religions into Key Stage 2. The aim is to ensure that pupils have knowledge of Christianity and of at least one other principal religion which is both reasonably deep and secure.

In addition to this focussed attention on Christianity and at least one other principal religion, pupils should over the course of the six years of primary education have some engagement with the four other principal religious traditions. There is no expectation that these additional four religions will be as well known, or as well understood, as children will know or understand Christianity and the second principal religion the school has chosen to focus on. What is required is that by the end of Key Stage 2 most children will have some secure quality of learning about Christianity and another principal religion and will also have some knowledge and awareness of the other four principal religions. It is accepted that pupils will have a more limited knowledge and understanding of the four principal religions that the school has not given focussed attention to but the deliberate aim here is to focus on fewer things in order to achieve greater depth.

Depth of knowledge

Much of Key Stage 2 should continue to encourage children to be curious about concrete examples of religious life and behaviour, for example, religious stories, artefacts, festivals, prayer and beliefs. During Key Stage 2 this knowledge should be extended to include more depth knowledge of Christianity and at least one other clearly identified religion. The material pupils engage with should be extended to include leaders of religion, holy books, religious ceremonies and the lives of individuals who have been influenced by faith.

Certain areas which were first explored in Key Stage 1 like festivals, for example, Christmas, Easter, and other topics like prayer, stories and beliefs are very likely to be visited again in Key Stage 2. This is perfectly acceptable. However, the intention should be not to simply repeat or reinforce earlier learning but to help pupils make progress so that they gain more knowledge but more specifically more depth of knowledge. This gaining of more depth of knowledge in Key Stage 2 often has to do with understanding and insight into what are often unique features and particular

nuances of beliefs which are characteristic of each particular religion.

Depth of knowledge: lost sheep example

This requirement for pupils to learn depth of knowledge can be illustrated using Jesus' story of the lost sheep (Mt 18:12-14, Lk 15:3-7). In Key Stage 1 children should not simply be taught to be able to recall the story of the lost sheep. They should enquire into it and attempt to interpret what the story might mean. Being very young some children will not understand what a 'message' or 'meaning' of a story means. They may need specific support, perhaps by using examples, so that they can be helped to understand what they are being required to do when they are asked 'what is this story trying to tell us?' A teacher might try using a non-Biblical story, like the story of 'The Tortoise and the Hare' to help children understand how a story may be more than just amusing or entertaining but may contain a more serious message or meaning. Discussing the story together, perhaps encouraged by some probing questions from the teacher, children in Key Stage 1 might suggest that a message contained in the lost sheep story is that people should be kind to others and that people should be helped if they are in trouble. An interpretation of this kind is not unusual in young children. Often the tendency is to see a moral in the story.

Thinking for themselves

It is important to try and avoid simply telling children, 'this is what the story means'. To do so would be to waste a valuable opportunity to encourage pupils to learn to think for themselves. If the 'meaning of the story' is simply didactically taught the teacher would have done the thinking leaving young children with simply the requirement to learn the interpretation offered to them turning the activity into a recall task rather than an analytical thinking task. Education should equip children to be able to work things out for themselves so that ultimately an educated person can extend the boundaries of human knowledge. An educated person is not simply a person who has learnt what is already known. An educated person has both the curiosity and the analytical enquiry skills to be able to work things out for themselves and so become a creative, thinking person. They possess knowledge in the sense of procedural knowledge so that one day they may be a person who pushes out the boundaries and so contributes to the extension of human knowledge and understanding.

In Key Stage 2 the story of the lost sheep might again feature in the scheme of work but the intention is not to ensure that the children can now merely more accurately or more creatively recall the details of the original Bible story. Inviting children to retell the story but to act it out as a play, or to storyboard it with a series of pictures with captions, or to retell the story but in a contemporary setting, may all be activities which children might enjoy doing. However, the emphasis on all such activities is merely upon the events in the story itself whereas, from the point of view of religious education, the emphasis should be on helping children to gain a deeper understanding into what the story might mean.

Self-sacrifice

In Key Stage 2 children may now be helped to understand that in the story of the lost sheep Jesus was saying more than that his followers should be kind to animals or people that are in trouble. Instead Jesus may have been teaching his followers that not only should they help other people but that this may require putting themselves out, making some effort, going through some hardship, or making a sacrifice. An important part of achieving a deeper understanding of this story is that Jesus may be

trying to teach that to be a true follower; to live a truly Christian life may well involve making a sacrifice in order to help others. The idea of self-sacrifice for the sake of others is a recurring theme in Christianity. It can be seen in the Christmas carol 'Good King Wenceslas' where the king, along with his page, risks the cruel frost to bring comfort to a poor man gathering firewood. It can be seen in the story of the Good Samaritan who risked stopping on a road well known for bandits to help another. It is reflected in Jesus' own life where we can see Jesus running risks to help others, as in the story of the Roman centurion's servant (Mt 8:5-13, Lk 7:1-10). The same theme of self-sacrifice is, of course, reflected in the Easter story.

This is not the only way in which the lost sheep story might be interpreted more deeply. Other very legitimate ways of more deeply interpreting the story is to see the shepherd as a representation of Jesus or perhaps of God. In this interpretation Jesus is the good shepherd and all of humanity are his flock. If one member of humanity gets lost then that matters deeply to God and God seeks to find that lost member of the flock. The belief that the individual matters and that God does not give up on anybody is another important aspect of the Christian tradition.

Symbolic interpretation

In Key Stage 2 pupils should become familiar with the idea that words may be used metaphorically and may have a symbolic or a non-literal meaning. The ability to appreciate that passages and words in religious texts often should not be understood literally but rather symbolically is an important aspect of making progress in RE. The distinction is fundamental to the idea of becoming religiously literate. It is in Key Stage 2 that children begin the process of recognising symbolism and metaphor in both religious language and religious ritual. An example of this can be seen in the word 'lost'. 'Lost' may mean literally to be geographically or physically lost but it may also metaphorically mean 'socially lost', or 'morally lost', or 'spiritually lost'. The lost sheep in the story may well be interpreted as meaning that followers of Jesus have a special responsibility to help those who are socially outcast from society or who have morally or spiritually lost their way. Thus the lost sheep story may be interpreted as suggesting that taking responsibility and going out of one's way to help those who are outcast and rejected, was central to Jesus' teaching.

The metaphorical interpretation of the word 'lost' in the context of the story of the lost sheep is well supported by the evidence of Jesus' own life where there is plenty of evidence that Jesus showed concern for tax collectors, lepers, the poor, the sick, women of ill repute, the marginalised and the rejected. The story of Jesus' birth involves an account of a young girl whose reputation is sullied and who gives birth to a child in humble circumstances and so, as a story, it is often interpreted as meaning that Jesus came into the world with a special mission which favoured the marginalised and rejected.

In Key Stage 2 pupils who show a deeper knowledge and understanding of this story might be able to identify who in their own experience might be a person who is marginalised or rejected. For example, it may be the elderly lady who lives in the corner house who is often grumpy with children in the neighbourhood, it may be the new kid who no one wants to play football with, or it may be a girl in school who many call Miss Piggy and who is regularly teased by other girls.

Frequently the context in which the passage appears suggests whether a literal or a symbolic interpretation is most appropriate. For example, the story of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son (the lost son) all appear together in Luke's gospel (Lk 15 v 3-32). This cluster of parables about the 'lost' precedes a passage where the Pharisees and scribes speak disapprovingly against Jesus' support for the

outcast and rejected. We are told they murmur against Jesus saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.' Being set in this context, it seems natural to many that the parables that follow are not really about animals that get lost or coins that go missing. They are really about people who have morally or spiritually lost their way in life and the responsibility we have towards them or the ongoing concern God has for them. The lost son or prodigal son story might be interpreted as adding an additional dimension. It too is about a person who has fallen to rock bottom and is 'lost' but also points to the narrow mindedness of individuals, reflected in the attitude of the elder son and perhaps in the attitude of many Pharisees, who are only willing to condemn such people and make no effort to help such 'lost' people find their way back.

A great deal of religious language, not just the religious language used in Christianity takes a symbolic form. Of course, there are particular passages and whether they should be interpreted literally or symbolically is contested. The teacher's role in Key Stage 2 is not to judge on behalf of the child these contested examples. The teacher's role is to open up to children an awareness that religious language may sometimes be literal and may sometimes be symbolic and that there are often clues and signs in the passage itself which suggests how the words should be interpreted.

Deeper awareness of *why*

Another way of achieving greater depth of knowledge is by helping children to achieve a deeper awareness of *why* certain religious rituals, ceremonies, practices and objects are of such significance within particular religious traditions. The Key Stage 1 Programme of Study makes it clear that while very young children should learn about the external and tangible aspects of religious life, the *how*, *who*, *what*, *where* and *when* certain things are undertaken, pupils should also be introduced to another highly important but less tangible aspect of religious education which is *why* certain religious things are undertaken or are regarded as important.

In Key Stage 1 young children's attempts to explain *why* a religious event like Christmas is important might reflect some knowledge, for example, a child might answer, 'Because it's Jesus' birthday'. If asked *why* people pray they might understand prayer in a rather crude mechanical sense of putting something in and then getting something back. Consequently in response to the question, 'Why do people pray?' they may answer, 'So God will give them something'.

Often very young children make use of cliché statements which seem appropriate and can be used to provide an answer to many *why* questions about religious practices. For example, if asked, 'Why is the Qur'an so important to Muslims?' young children may provide an answer of sorts by saying, 'Because it's special'. This sort of answer is not wrong but in Key Stage 2 children should be encouraged to appreciate that the '*it's special*' answer is a very limited response. It simply begs the question – What exactly is it about the Qur'an that makes it so special? As an answer the statement '*it's special*' – shows no specific depth knowledge or insight into Islam and so doesn't really explain why the Qur'an is 'special'. Unless given help so that they understand what a better answer might look like children quickly learn that saying something is 'special' provides a sort of easy, generic answer which can be regularly applied to many religions and many religious events or practices, for example:

Question 'Why is the Sabbath so important to Jewish people?'

Answer 'It's important because it's special.'

Question 'Why do many Sikhs wear the Five K's?'

Answer 'Because the Five K's are special'.

Question 'Why do many Christians have bread and wine when they worship?

Answer 'Because having bread and wine is special'.

Along with *'it's special'* there are other generic responses which are typically used by children, for example, statements like, *'it's holy'* or *'it makes them feel closer to God'* are frequently used. Responses of this kind do indicate children attempting to make an attempt to explain the motives and reasons behind a religious life. However, such responses are always rather limited as they do not contain much in the way of knowledge, let alone what might be called deep knowledge into the emotions and beliefs which are specific to particular religious traditions which inspires commitment to a particular religious tradition.

To summarise - one of the aims in Key Stage 2 is for children to acquire deeper knowledge to be able to give better *why* answers in response to questions about religious ritual and ceremony. The aim is for children to make progress so that by the end of Key Stage 2 they acquire knowledge which enables them to be able to give better answers than simply cliché responses like, *'it's special'*, or *'it's holy'*, or *'it makes them feel closer to God'*. However, what exactly do these better *why* answers look like? Describing a better *why* answer in abstract terms probably will not help but a specific concrete example might.

Depth of knowledge: Holy Communion example

Imagine a school which has decided that in Key Stage 2 in year 5 pupils will be taught a number of lessons which will engage them in an enquiry into 'What is Holy Communion?' the purpose being to help the pupils better understand the meaning and significance of Holy Communion. Part of the enquiry will involve the pupils visiting an Anglican church that is not far from the school. The plan is to learn from the minister and three members of the congregation that have volunteered to be there during the visit what their views about Holy Communion and what the ceremony means to them.

In preparation for this visit the children learn about how the word 'bread' is often used as a metaphor, for example, 'bread' (also *'dough'*) can be used as a slang word meaning 'money'. The phrase 'bread-winner' means the 'main money earner in a family.' The phrase 'bread and butter' is used to mean 'the basic requirements'. The children recall earlier work they did in Y4 on the Lord's Prayer when they learnt that the words 'our daily bread' are often interpreted to mean 'the basic necessities needed to sustain life'.

In the next lesson the children learn about the story of the feeding of the five thousand (Jn 6 v 5-15) and learn that a little later in John's gospel Jesus says of himself that he is 'the bread of life' (Jn 6 v 35). The class share ideas and discuss what Jesus might have meant when he used these words.

In the next lesson the pupils learn about the story of the last supper and how Jesus blesses and breaks bread and passes it to his disciples saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body'. The class share ideas and discuss what Jesus might have meant by these words and actions.

The next lesson involves the visit to the Anglican church. The minister provides a demonstration of what happens during Holy Communion and provides a commentary on the ceremony. The minister tells the pupils that Holy Communion is like a family

coming together. The pupils are told 'the family of God comes together and shares a meal and this binds them together. It strengthens fellowship.' The pupils in small groups interview three members of the congregation and learn from one member of the congregation that during the service for her it is 'as if Jesus becomes present among them'. Another member of the congregation talked about receiving the bread and wine as being 'like the food I need which spiritually feeds me'. A third member of the congregation says that the service reminds him of Jesus and how he died 'so all might live'.

In the final lesson the class share ideas and discuss what Holy Communion means to Christians. The main ideas and views pupils have about Holy Communion are discussed and are digitally recorded and are presented as speech bubbles on a class display board. A typical thought recorded from one pupil called Sophie was, 'Christians believe that in Holy Communion Jesus becomes present among them. By reliving the events of the Last Supper in a special way they become closer to God'. Sophie still makes use of generic statements but she also shows a more specific and nuanced understanding of what Holy Communion more precisely means from the perspective of the Christian community.

Depth of knowledge: Muslim prayer example

The same idea of moving beyond generic statements and gaining deeper knowledge may be seen in the following example. Pupils in year 5 later return to the subject of worship. However, this time the plan is to enquire into the five times a day obligatory prayer in Islam. A series of lessons are planned under the heading of, 'Why do Muslims perform salah?' Using a number of images the children explore how body language may be used to express deep emotions and feelings like joy, disappointment, affection and submission. Pupils learn about the basic body positions used during salah – standing, bowing and prostration and two related questions are posed - What do these body positions express? Why do Muslims perform salah?

In the next lesson pupils are encouraged to discuss in small groups what the body positions Muslims used in prayer might express or symbolise. The idea that the bowing and prostration positions are expressions of surrender or submission is explored. The pupils learn that an important idea behind Muslim prayer is that it is an expression of 'submission to God'. Pupils also learn that the word 'Muslim' means 'a person who submits to God'.

In the next lesson pupils are encouraged to discuss what the statement 'submission to God' might mean. They learn about the words of the first chapter of the Qur'an, 'The Opening' which is a prayer spoken during salah which contains the request, 'Guide us on the straight path' (Ch1 v 5). The pupils learn that 'the straight path' (*the shariah*) in Muslim belief is believed to have been frequently revealed by God to prophets before Muhammad. However, humans, often due to an excess of arrogance and a lack of humility – or an unwillingness to be in submission to God - have repeatedly thought they knew better and have drifted off 'the straight path' deciding for themselves what is good and bad. Pupils learn that the belief in Islam is that this leads to corruption and violence. It results in a lack of peace between people and a lack of peace or tranquility in the heart and mind of the individual. To live life by following 'the straight path' is to live life according to our true nature and only by living according to our true nature can a person be truly happy and content – that is, at peace.

In a final lesson a local Imam visits the class. He demonstrates how Muslims

undertake salah and talks about what the prayer means to him. The pupils ask the visitor questions they have prepared and share their thoughts about why Muslims perform salah. Their thoughts are recorded and are displayed in the classroom. A typical thought recorded by one boy called Anthony was, 'Muslims believe that prayer is very special and they should pray five times a day. They believe it helps them not to get too full of themselves or to forget God but to be submitted to God and to follow God's commandments.'

In this example we can see that Anthony, like Sophie, has a more specific and nuanced understanding of prayer as it is practiced in Islam. He doesn't just jumble Christianity and Islam together claiming that prayer in both of these faiths is more or less the same as it is about being, 'closer to God'. He understands something of the backstory of Islamic prayer which results in prayer in Islam having particular features because it reflects particular beliefs which are central to the Islamic tradition.

Learning from religion

It is noticeable that in Key Stage 2, if permitted or encouraged to do so, children will raise questions which are important to them about the truth and worth of the religious material they learn about. They notice that religious material contains implicit claims which they wonder about and question. Giving a clear signal to young people that it is not just OK in Key Stage 2 but that it is desirable and expected that they should examine the religious ideas and practices they learn about and that they should be deciding for themselves where they stand on questions to do with religious belief and practice. Forming their own views on some of the big questions in life – What is life? How did it come about? How should I live as a person? What do I value and believe in? – and knowing why they hold those views is central to each person's personal development. RE's role in this is to actively encourage such questioning and thinking. It is a central part of *learning from religion*.

Often, however questions about the 'truth and worth' of religion which children wish to engage with are avoided so that pupils end up in a personal examination of themselves rather than an impersonal examination of religion. Ofsted's 2006 – 2009 report on RE '*Transforming religious education*' provides an interesting example of this (see p.33-34). A Year 4 class are told the story of the miracle of the healing of the blind man (Mk 8 V 22-26). The question which the teacher explores with the children is - 'What would it feel like to be blind?' The main task the pupils are set is to write a poem about what they would miss if they were blind.

However, had the teacher invited the children to suggest a question of their own in response to the story some of the children, perhaps quite a few, would have focused on the miracle itself. They would have asked questions like:

'Did Jesus really cure the blind man or is it a made-up story?'

'Do miracles still happen today?'

'Why doesn't Jesus or God just cure everyone?'

Questions like these are important in RE as they often touch on the real issues and concerns many children have in relationship to faith. What the Key Stage 2 teacher should be looking for is not that children should be affirming certain beliefs or that they give certain answers to these questions. Rather the requirement is that by the end of Key Stage 2 children should be showing the ability to think about religious claims and issues. They should be demonstrating some ability to take on board and give consideration to views they may disagree with. They should be showing the ability to express their own views and the ability to support their views using relevant reasons which are, if possible, clear and cogently expressed.

Key Stage 2 What should be taught

Core Knowledge and skills

stories

Pupils should learn about Christian stories that are in the Bible. Stories that they learnt about in Key Stage 1 like, the lost sheep, the lost (prodigal) son, the Pharisee and the tax-collector and the Good Samaritan may be revisited in Key Stage 2 in order to gain a deeper understanding of how these stories may be interpreted. In addition pupils should also learn about other New Testament stories, for example, the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector, the Centurion's servant, the healing of the blind man, the feeding of the five thousand, the unforgiving servant (Mt 18 v 21-35) and the Lord's Prayer (Lk 11 v 1-4). Pupils should also learn about Bible stories which are part of the shared Judaic-Christian tradition, for example, the Creation Story, Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, Moses and the Ten Commandments. Pupils should be encouraged to enquire into how these stories may be interpreted and what values and beliefs they may be expressing. Pupils should also learn about stories associated with at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their views and thoughts in response to any message or moral these stories may be expressing and support their views with clear and cogent reasons.

worship

Pupils should learn about Christian worship. Types of prayer like praising (devotional) prayer, asking (petitionary) prayer may be revisited in Key Stage 2 in order to gain a deeper understanding, for example, pupils might consider different types of asking prayers and whether asking for some things might be appropriate while other things might not be. The Lord's Prayer as a model for prayer involving devotion, confession and petition in Christianity should be explored. Pupils should also learn about Holy Communion, the symbolism involved in the ceremony, the idea of a fellowship meal and the idea of Christ being present. Pupils should also learn about worship in at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to their enquiry into worship. They should be taught to support their views or beliefs making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

festivals

Pupils should learn about Christian festivals. Festivals like Christmas and Easter may be revisited in Key Stage 2 in order to gain a deeper understanding. For example, pupils might explore the idea that Christmas is a time of peace and goodwill, a time for putting aside disagreements and of seeking reconciliation. Pupils might explore the belief that Easter was a victory when good triumphed over evil. Pupils should also learn about festivals in at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to the beliefs that festivals often celebrate. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

leaders of religion

Pupils should learn about Jesus of Nazareth as the founder of Christianity. They should by the end of key Stage 2 have a reasonably secure knowledge of events in Jesus' life like the story of his birth, his baptism, his entry into Jerusalem, the last supper, his death and his resurrection. They should also have learnt that Jesus showed a particular concern for the marginalised and rejected as reflected in his attitude towards people like Zacchaeus the tax collector and the Roman Centurion

whose servant was sick. Pupils should have knowledge of some of the parables which Jesus used to teach about kindness, going out of one's way to help others and of having a forgiving nature, as reflected in stories like the lost sheep, the lost (prodigal) son, the Good Samaritan and the unforgiving servant. Pupils should also have learnt about some of the miracle stories associated with Jesus, for example, the healing of the blind man and the feeding of the five thousand. They should also have been taught about Christian beliefs about Jesus, for example, that Jesus is not in the Christian tradition merely a prophet of God and he was not just a wise man who taught about God or that Jesus was a moral teacher who taught about what was right and wrong. Pupils should be taught about the mainstream Christian view that Jesus was God living on earth in human form, that Jesus was the Saviour and that Jesus is the second person in the Trinity which consists of the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. Pupils should also learn about the leader of religion in at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to the beliefs held about leaders of religion. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

holy books

Pupils should learn about the Bible as the holy book of Christianity. They should learn that for Christians the Bible is made up of two main sections, of which there is material which pre dates the life of Jesus, which is sacred for both Jews and Christians. They should learn about stories (see earlier section on stories p.61) associated with certain books of the Bible, for example, Genesis, Exodus and the Gospels. Pupils should explore the idea of literal and non-literal or symbolic interpretation of scriptural passages. Pupils should be taught that the Bible is divided into named books, numbered chapters and numbered verses. Pupils should explore the Christian belief that the Bible is 'holy' and that individuals have received divine revelation or have been divinely inspired. Pupils should also learn about the holy book or scriptures associated with at least one other religion. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to what they have learnt. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

people of faith

Pupils should be taught about the life and work of at least one person who was motivated or inspired by their Christian faith. Pupils may explore the life of a well-known person drawn from history, for example, St Francis of Assisi, Thomas Barnardo, Florence Nightingale, Harriet Tubman, Mary Seacole, Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu or Jackie Pullinger. Or pupils may explore the life and work of an individual in the local community who may work or volunteer their time and energy to the disadvantaged, or a 'good cause' either locally or abroad. Pupils should explore in what way this person's life and work has any direct links to Christian teaching and practice and in what ways, if any, their faith may be of help to them. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to what they have learnt. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

Beliefs

Pupils should learn about some major Christian beliefs, for example, central beliefs about God as creator, Father and the idea of God as being a loving and all-powerful God. Pupils should learn about central beliefs associated with Jesus, for example,

that for many Christians Jesus was God living on earth in human form, was resurrected from the dead, and lives on today, is known as the Son of God, that Jesus was the Saviour, that Jesus is the second person in the Trinity. Pupils should learn about central beliefs associated with the belief in the resurrection of the dead and eternal life. Pupils should learn about beliefs associated with living a Christian life, for example, a Christian life is a life lived in relationship with God, it involves a commitment to the welfare of others, forgiveness, love and charity. Pupils should also learn about some central beliefs associated with at least one other religion. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to what they have learnt. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

An enquiry based approach

Religious education should not be seen as simply imparting to young people a body of knowledge about an organised religion, or about imparting knowledge about several organised religions. If children are only required to learn information about religion the question why they should do so, why this information is relevant, or why it should be of interest to the child remains unclear and this is often a barrier to effective learning.

RE- related learning is more likely to be achieved if a clear RE question is identified from the beginning and is pursued over several lessons. In this way the lessons should be conceived of as being an enquiry into a particular RE related question. Children should become familiar with the idea that the answer to the question being enquired into is not one which they can get from the teacher. The answer, such as it is, is one they have to think about for themselves and answer for themselves. It may not be very clear to the children that they are involved in an enquiry if traditional topic titles are used. For example, topic titles like, 'Pesach', 'Creation stories', 'Signs and symbols', 'Easter' and 'Forgiveness' are not wrong but they do not immediately make it clear what the focus of the enquiry is.

Enquiry based KS2 topics

Examples of possible KS2 enquiry topics are:

Who was Jesus?
What is the Bible?
Why do Muslims pray?
What is the meaning of Christmas?
How should animals be treated?
What is Holy Communion?
Who was Guru Nanak?
Why is Pesach celebrated?
Where do rules come from?
What is prayer?
Did Jesus make the blind see?
What did the Buddha teach?
Do Hindus believe in many gods?
Does faith make a difference?
Why is Muhammad important to Muslims?

These enquiry topics are not a list of topics that must be taught in Key Stage 2. They are examples of topic titles schools may find helpful.

Philosophy 4 children (P4C)

Philosophy for children principles are increasingly being used successfully in primary education especially when teaching RE. The strategy used mainly involves encouraging children to raise their own questions in response to a stimulus. The stimulus may be an image, a video clip, an artefact, a story, a poem. The stimulus may be of an overt religious nature like a religious story or a religious image. However, it need not be so, for example, an image of frantic Christmas shoppers shown to pupils may throw up questions about whether we have lost touch with the real meaning of Christmas, or a short story involving a moral dilemma may throw up questions about where rules come from.

As well as children taking charge of raising questions themselves another important part of the P4C strategy is to change the dynamics of the classroom. Children are not expected to discuss issues sitting in groups or in rows but are instead required to sit as a member of a large circle so that everyone can see and hear everyone else. The teacher also sits as a member of the circle but they make it clear that they will not be contributing but they will be actively listening. Certain rules like not interrupting people and not putting people down are agreed before the discussion begins and then essentially the discussion is in the hands of the children. This technique, sometimes known as 'Community of Enquiry', often results in high quality and vibrant pupil to pupil discussion. The technique is a powerful one for developing thinking and oracy skills. It can dramatically increase young people's interest in RE as they feel they are raising and tackling questions they want to talk about. The technique is often also reported to have improved the quality of children's writing in RE as talking is often an excellent preliminary to writing.



A visit to Dudley's Central mosque.

Key Stage 3 Programme of Study

Summary statement

This page contains a summary of the core knowledge and skills which should be taught and of the requirements which should be kept in mind when planning and delivering Key Stage 3 religious education. The following pages 67-78 contain additional information on what to do and how to plan a Key Stage 3 religious education scheme of work

Key Stage 3 Core knowledge

- (1) During Key Stage 3 pupils must explore Christianity and at least one other principal religion with the intention of ensuring that pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of at least one other principal religion should become sound, deep and secure.
- (2) pupils should also have an opportunity to be acquainted with other principal religions.
- (3) there should be a focus on teaching fewer things but in greater depth
- (4) the expectation is that schools will move towards a more 'beliefs and issues' approach to religious education
- (5) pupils should be permitted and encouraged to raise questions which are important to them about the truth and worth of the religious material they learn about.
- (6) pupils should be encouraged to express, discuss and debate their own views in response to the religious material they learn about and should be encouraged to support their views using critical thinking skills and informed reasons,
- (7) pupils should also be encouraged to develop an understand of and to be able to address arguments to the contrary
- (8) pupils should be encouraged to develop the ability to be able to disagree with courtesy.

The core knowledge that should be taught in Key Stage 3 involves an emphasis on a 'beliefs and issues' programme in which the following four topics as a core minimum are expected to be explored: the existence of God, the problem of evil, science and religion and life after death.

Core knowledge should not be thought of as meaning literally only knowledge. Part of the core knowledge every child should be acquiring in Key Stage 3 is the ability to critically think about and articulate their own response to the religious material they learn about and to form their own values and beliefs. They should be helped to make clear how they might give grounds or informed reasons which support their values and beliefs which are relevant and cogent.

Finally, this summary statement about core knowledge is about what should be taught during Key Stage 3. It is not a statement about everything that may be included in a Key Stage 3 RE scheme of work. The core is the essential minimum which should be manageable given the time schools should allocate to the teaching of RE. In addition to the minimum core schools should be able to provide a good deal more given the recommended time allocation of 45 hours per year. (p.5)

Introduction

There is a strong recommendation that in this Key Stage there should be a focus on teaching fewer things but in greater depth. In other words, there is little educational value in tackling complex and difficult religious and moral questions, for example the 'problem of evil' or 'Do animals have rights?' by providing only a brief glimpse into these issues from the perspective of four, five or six different religious traditions. It is much better to explore issues of this kind more carefully looking at the arguments and evidence in more depth by drawing upon the way in which these issues have been discussed in perhaps only one or two religious traditions.

Beliefs and issues

In Key Stage 3 the expectation is that schools will adopt a scheme of work which will be mainly concerned with what has been called a 'beliefs and issues' approach to religious education. This will mean that schools will encourage young people to enquire into perennial questions and issues which are which are continually being debated and which for many are, and in some cases always have been, at the heart of what religious faith and belief is about. They are in a sense permanent issues which in all likelihood are never to any individual's satisfaction fully resolved. Given the triumphs, disappointments, setbacks and tragedies all human life is prone to, they are questions which are regularly revisited, and the answers we might give are checked over and refined many times in the course of a lifetime.

Suitable topics that would form part of a 'beliefs and issues' scheme of work include: What is God like? Is there a God? Why is there so much suffering in the world? Does God just watch the universe and never interferes? Do science and religion contradict each other? Was the universe created or did it just start? Why do we exist? Does life have a purpose? In a world of suffering is personal happiness an appropriate goal? If it is how may happiness be achieved? Is there a life after death? Do we have a soul? Is there an eternal life? If there is an eternal life what is it like? Does God respond to prayer? Are miracles real events or metaphors or something else? How is one to live? How do we know what is good? Why are there many faiths? Is practicing religion privately appropriate? Is private faith acceptable to God?

Not all religious questions are specific to a religious tradition. They often cut across religions and are generic to several religious traditions. A 'beliefs and issues' scheme of work is however also likely to include questions which are specific to particular religious traditions. It is likely also to contain questions which pupils, if they are encouraged, will themselves raise and will make it clear that they wish to discuss, for example, Why did Jesus have to suffer and die? By dying on the cross what did Jesus save us from? Did Jesus rise from the dead? Would a loving God permit hell? Have we lived many lives? Are there angels? Is the story of Noah's Ark history or myth? Do you have to believe in God to be saved?

Providing the paint box

Including questions of this kind in an RE scheme of work means that young people may challenge religion but it also means they are challenged by religion. There is no expectation that religious education neatly provides answers to such questions, or that classroom enquiries will conclude with an answer. One of the important purposes of RE is to introduce young people to some of the arguments, ideas, issues and difficulties surrounding questions of this kind. Religious education is the major place in the school curriculum where these important questions get an airing. By

bringing such questions out into the open and examining these issues as best one can, young people may be provided with what skills and tools are available to us which can be of help to them in their own personal search for meaning, and will continue to be of help to them when they find it necessary to revisit such questions at times later in their life. Religious education does not provide the painting, it provides the paint box.

A 'beliefs and issues' scheme of work also involves enquiring into moral issues about which a religion may have shown particular interest or about which a religion has made a particular contribution. Suitable moral topics that may form part of a beliefs and issues scheme of work include: animal rights, global warming, wealth, material possessions, fame, personal honesty, the use of force, and how religion is expressed in literature, art and the media.

'Phenomenology' topics

Many secondary schools have already adopted something like a 'beliefs and issues' scheme of work. However, it is known that some schools feel that they teach young people who would find it difficult to cope with a sustained 'beliefs and issues' programme of work. It is argued that some young people as well as being taught topics based on 'beliefs and issues' themes, it would be helpful if they were also taught topics where the religious material being explored was more tangible and not so abstract. In other words, as well as teaching topics like, 'Science and religion' or 'Is there a life after death?' other topics may also usefully be taught. These other topics are often associated with what is called 'phenomenology' RE. They include topics like, 'places of worship', 'rites of passage' or 'places of pilgrimage'.

If a school wishes to teach 'phenomenology' topics alongside 'beliefs and issues' topics they may do so. However, schools are strongly urged to ensure that if they do choose to teach 'phenomenology' topics alongside 'beliefs and issues' topics whatever the title of the topic the central enquiry they engage in must always be challenging. A topic on 'Rites of Passage' which merely requires young people to be able to recall or describe a Christian or a Hindu funeral would not be satisfactory. Similarly a topic on the 'Problem of Evil' which merely requires young people to be able to list examples of 'moral evil' for which humans are clearly responsible in contrast with a list of 'natural evil' for which natural causes appear to be the main factor, would also not be satisfactory. The topic must attempt to engage young people in higher order thinking so that they learn to acquire the skills of analysis, interpretation and above all evaluation.

Beliefs and Issues topics

The information provided below outlines some of the arguments and ideas that it is suggested may be explored using the 'beliefs and issues' topics referred to in the introduction. It is not expected that schools will attempt to teach all of these topics or cover all of the material described but will sensibly select what is most suitable knowing the young people they teach and the circumstances that exist in their school.

(a) What is God like?

This topic is likely to acquaint young people with the idea of a Deist's view of God in contrast to a Theist's view of God. A Deist God having created the world then steps back and does not get involved. Perhaps such a God has even disappeared, or has gone off to create another world. This concept of God may be contrasted with the

Theistic God which also claims that God created the world but that God remains highly active and is continually engaged in what happens in the world.

Pupils may also explore the idea of God as an aloof and abstract 'force'. Such a God is not one with which the believer develops a relationship or in any sense ascribes virtues to like 'good', 'just', 'loving', 'forgiving' or 'benevolent'. Just as we do not ascribe virtues to or feel we have a relationship with gravity or with the electromagnetic force. Such a view may be contrasted with the view that God is believed to be a person and not just a thing. The idea that a relationship with such a being is possible is expressed in metaphors like 'Father' and 'Lord'. Related to these ideas is the view that God is immanent and is always close at hand compared to the idea that God is transcendent that is quite distinct and separate from the physical universe.

Metaphorical or non-literal language may also be explored so that pupils may be helped to think about their response to language like the 'hand of God' or talk of God being 'up there' or 'out there' or 'above us'. Key words often used to describe God like omnipotence, omniscience and oneness may also be explored.

Pupils may also look into dualistic ideas of God. That is the belief that there is in a sense two rival Gods, a good God and an evil God. Although the view may be held that the good God will ultimately win out, at the moment something of a battle rages between the two.

(b) Is there a God?

This topic might explore some of the traditional arguments for God about which much has been written and discussed. Although they have been well mauled, these arguments continue to be part of the current discussion and so they continue still to be very relevant.

This topic might provide an opportunity for pupils to be acquainted with the first cause argument which suggests that the universe somehow came into existence and how or why that happened remains a mystery. The suggestion that God caused the universe to exist still has for many great currency. Does it provide 'proof'? The idea that the existence of the universe itself is possible evidence for a theistic God provides a good area for rigorous and thoughtful discussion.

The design argument might also be explored. This argument has traditionally identified evidence of design from the biological world, for example, the human eye, the wing of a bird, the fins on fish. Criticism of this argument arising from particularly the evidence for 'natural selection' has led to other examples of design drawn from the physical world. For example, pupils might explore the 'Goldilocks argument' that it is improbable to imagine that it was just a bit of good luck that our planet is just right to support life. The fact that oxygen levels are just about right, that the planet's moderate range of temperatures is just right, that the earth has a magnetic field which is just right to deflect a great deal of dangerous solar radiation, suggests that there is a God that deliberately designed the world to ensure that life could exist on this planet. The counter argument might also be explored, that it is bound to appear fortunate that we live on a planet that is well suited to support life as given all the billions of planets out there it should come as no surprise that at least one exists which fits the bill.

The topic might also explore our feeling that we have a moral sense. The pupils might enquire into the idea that although we might not always do what is morally right we still continue to believe that some things are right and other things are clearly

wrong. Have we in a sense been programmed to know right from wrong? If so is this apparent 'programming' evidence of God? It might be argued that we are clearly not like lions or crocodiles which can happily take life in order to survive and such animals appear not for one moment to suffer any sense of regret that they do take life. Why is it that then that few of us could take life, for example, kill a chicken, and then as if nothing had happened carry on with not a twinge of guilt sensing that we had done something that was not good? Pupils might discuss the argument that the fact that we feel responsible or ashamed when we go against our conscience suggests that there is something outside of ourselves that is the source of that conscience and that there is something much greater than ourselves to whom we are ultimately responsible and answerable to. If there is such a thing isn't that what we call God? Pupils might also explore the counter argument that our conscience comes mainly from our parents and social conditioning. Or the argument that our sense of right and wrong comes about because we have evolved over thousands of years and that rules about how we should behave in order that we more or less get along with each other is part of our evolved pattern of behaviour.

Pupils might also consider the argument that the question, 'Is there a God?' is inappropriate as God doesn't exist as God is outside of existence. Attempts to argue that does exist are bound to disappoint as God's existence is not something that can be 'proved' or 'demonstrated'. Belief in God is an act of faith, and is not subject to a clever 'proof'.

(c) Why is there so much suffering in the world?

The intention behind this topic is to help the pupils to enquire into some of the various issues and arguments associated with 'the problem of evil'. The problem being - If God is all-powerful and all-loving why is there so much suffering in the world?

Various arguments have been made to explain the apparent dilemma. For example, pupils might explore 'control arguments'.

Control arguments

'Control arguments' are arguments that suggest that God does not have the sort of total control of everything that might be imagined. For example, it has been argued God gave humans free will. This has a very positive feature as only humans with free will can be 'moral agents' and so be held responsible for their behaviour. However, the down side is that it means some humans are free to do evil things which brings great suffering into the world.

The argument that the devil sometimes is the cause of terrible tragedies is also a 'control argument'. With this argument it is claimed that God is in overall control but that sometimes the devil gains control perhaps only for a very short time but when that happens terrible things can take place. An analogy for the situation might be that God is in overall control driving the train but in particular carriages things may be going wrong because the devil has for a while at least in some of the carriages gained the upper hand.

Instrument arguments

'Instrument arguments' might also be investigated. Arguments of this kind claim that God uses evil as an instrument to bring about a greater good. For example, suffering might be used as an instrument by God to test an individual's or perhaps even a whole nation's faith. The story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son is often used as an illustration of this claim.

Alternatively, it has been argued that suffering is again God's instrument but this time it is in the form of punishment and that God's purpose in bringing tragedy on a person or group of people is to bring back those who have gone astray so that they mend their ways.

Another variation on this argument is the claim that humans see only a very small part of the picture and not the 'big picture'. An event that to us seems to be an unnecessary disaster which God could have prevented might look very different if we could see all the unforeseen outcomes and unpredictable consequences. In other words, if we saw things with God's much bigger perspective events which look bad might in the long run turn out to be very good.

A fourth form of 'instrument' argument is the claim that suffering and disasters in life are necessary experiences if we are to spiritually grow. God is not a pet owner that has put humans in a perfect pet cage. Instead this is a world in which we will inevitably experience hardships, knocks and challenges because only by doing so do we grow and mature and so become more like the spiritual being God intended us to be. The world we live in is a vale of soul-making. It is a world designed to prepare us for what ultimately we were intended to become – that is beings that can live in fellowship with God.

Pupils might also explore the argument which is widely used in the Christian tradition based on the belief that God made himself flesh and lived on earth. For many Christians this means that when they suffer, they believe God is at their side sharing in their suffering. God is the suffering God who intimately knows about human suffering having in the person of Christ experienced it at first-hand.

Pupils also might give consideration to the argument that whatever suffering we experience in this life must be weighed against the great fulfilment to be experienced in the world to come. Counter arguments to this might also be considered. For example, can the promise of a massive treat in the future mean that hurt and pain experienced now is justified?

(d) Do science and religion contradict each other?

This is a popular, important but quite difficult topic to enquire into. When planning and delivering a topic on 'Science and Religion' it is easy to make generalisations about both science and religion. For example, it is easy to give the impression that all Christians believe that God made the world in six days or that it is a Christian requirement to believe that Adam and Eve were quite literally the first man and woman. Similarly it is also easy to give the impression that all scientists must be atheists and that they adopt a brand of atheism that is hostile, perhaps even derogatory, when it comes to religion.

This topic should attempt to present a more balanced picture. Young people should be encouraged to discover that many Christians have no problem believing that the world came into existence some 14 billion years ago following what is often called a 'Big Bang'. Similarly, many Christians have no quarrel with Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution. Both the Big Bang and the Theory of Evolution for many Christians are seen as scientific insights into the origins of the universe and of life on earth. They accept and welcome these insights and do not feel their faith is threatened or compromised by them but indeed welcome them as valuable contributions to the sum of human knowledge.

The pupils may usefully learn that when Darwin's 'Origin of Species' was published in

1859 although there were individuals like the Bishop of Oxford Samuel Wilberforce who denounced Darwin's ideas, Bishop Wilberforce represented a conservative view which at the time was being challenged by liberal minded church leaders. The conservative view was that parts of the Bible, for example, the Genesis account of creation, Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark were all literally true events. However, many leading clergy, like the seven authors of 'Essays and Reviews' which was published only four months after the 'Origin' had come out openly disagreed with this view. Increasing numbers of liberal Christians were claiming that Bible scholarship was providing good evidence for believing that parts of the Bible contained a genre of writing called 'myth'. A myth wasn't a lie, or simply a made up story, but was an ancient method of vividly giving expression to profound statements about human life and the human condition. For many the argument was not so much between science and religion but rather between a conservative and a liberal understanding of scripture. Is much discussion today about 'intelligent design' and 'young earth creationism' the same argument where literal interpretations of scripture are being challenged by liberal interpretations?

The Big Bang 'standard model'

Pupils might also explore why there is an urge to know how the universe began. The idea might be discussed that if we know how the universe began this might largely explain why we exist. Current scientific views about the origin of the universe might be explored. This might usefully involve collaboration between the RE and the science department as it is important not to give an over simplistic and misleading account of what is being claimed or omit the fact that this account is not based merely on speculation or what is currently fashionable but is consistently supported by evidence. Pupils should be acquainted with the evidence, for example, that a cosmic microwave background radiation can be detected which is consistent with a big bang. They might also learn that electromagnetic radiation from distant galaxies have a long wavelength or 'redshift' which suggests these objects are moving away from us. By calculating back the 'standard model' adopted by most scientists today is that the universe began with an explosion, or a 'Big Bang', about 14 billion years ago. This was not an explosion of matter as we know it. In those first milliseconds the temperature was so high that ordinary matter like molecules and atoms did not exist. Instead there were elementary sub-atomic particles. Much later it would become cool enough for atoms of hydrogen and helium to form. Eventually stars and galaxies which make our present universe would emerge.

This 'standard model' account of the origin of the universe might be discussed and compared with the Genesis account but certain features should be noted. The 'standard model' is not presented as the final version. It is accepted that in science 'knowledge' is seen as being provisional and not permanent and is subject to current available evidence. The 'standard model' describes what happened in the milliseconds and subsequent years after the explosion but it makes no claim to knowledge before the explosion. It makes no claim to knowledge of motive or intention for why the universe came into existence. Is Genesis really to be seen as an alternative account of the universes origin? Is it really science? The Genesis account, it might be argued wishes to ascribe motive and intention making it clear that God is the driving force and that humanity is the culmination and climax of that process. Does this suggest that Genesis wishes to express value statements about the place of God and humanity in the universe claiming these to be permanent truths? Is it a myth story meaning not that it is untrue, but that in a vivid way it seeks to express truths claiming that the universe has a purpose because God intended it to exist and that humanity has a special place in God's plan? In simple terms it might be said that science and religion are not in competition offering rival accounts. They are providing different answers to very different questions. Again, in simple terms it might be said that science is attempting to answer a 'how' empirical question,

'How did the universe come about?' while religion is attempting to answer a 'why' value question, 'Why do we exist?'

Non-overlapping magisteria (NOMA)

Pupils might also enquire into the idea of 'Non-overlapping magisteria' or NOMA. This was a phrase coined by the eminent biologist Stephen Jay Gould to express his view that the area of expertise that science occupied had to do with what the universe is made of and why it works in the way that it does. Whereas religion occupies a very separate area of expertise which has to do with questions about ultimate meaning and moral value. These two areas of expertise do not overlap. The suggestion is that science should not drift into questions about ultimate meaning or about moral values. It also suggests that religion has nothing to contribute when it comes to trying to explain what the universe is made of and why it works in the way that it does.

Pupils might explore whether the NOMA claim really works. Do not science and religion inevitably clash? For example, scientists currently working on stem cell research are told that their work is morally wrong because stem cells are removed from six-day-old embryos. While some scientists agree with this judgement others argue that a six-day-old embryo cannot be described as a human being as at this stage it is a cluster of cells. Are scientists 'playing at being God' or is religion inferring with science? It might also be argued that the claim that religion has special expertise when it comes to morality or to knowledge about ultimate meaning is very doubtful. For example, has religion shown itself to have great moral insight with respect to its attitude to women or when one considers its long historical tolerance of slavery?

The God of the Gaps

Pupils might enquire into the view that a defense of God takes the form of a God of the gaps. This was a term first used by the 19th century evangelist Henry Drummond who criticised Christians that identified things that science could not yet explain by filling up such gaps with an explanation which relied on God. For example, why would peacocks have such extravagant and beautiful plumage or why should humans sometimes show altruism? Such things appeared to have no survival value so their existence must be due to God's wish that peacocks should be beautiful and that humans could be, from time to time, heroically good. Drummond urged the belief in the God of Evolution claiming that this was a much grander vision of God than the 'occasional wonder-worker, who is the God of an old theology.' The term was taken up by Dietrich Bonhoeffer who said we should find God in what we know, not in what we don't know. However, it has been argued that there will always be things that science can never know. For example, will science ever demonstrate convincingly that we do not have a soul? Or that we cannot survive death? Or that the soul is immortal? Or that life has an ultimate purpose? Or that after this life we enter into a much more glorified state of existence?

(e) Is there a life after death?

This topic engages pupils in an enquiry into an ancient belief which is found within many religions. The topic would focus not on information about funeral rites or rituals but explore the idea that for many people of faith that death is not the end but there is a real sense that we continue to exist after this life ceases. Over the last two and a half thousand years there have been numerous attempts to firm up this belief with proof or evidence that we do indeed survive death.

One of the oldest arguments which established itself as part of the ancient Greek

tradition and which still strongly resonates with people today is the sense that there is an inner self which consists not of physical matter like the heart, the brain or the lungs but consists of invisible spiritual matter. An examination of a dead body reveals no loss of physical matter and so it was inferred that what had happened to cause death was the loss of invisible spiritual matter. The source of life itself had escaped from the body and the source of life was the psyche or the soul. As the soul was the source of life it could not be destroyed, it continued to exist – it was life *itself*. Coupled with this idea was the belief that there was eternal knowledge which was always true. For example, $2 + 3 = 5$ was an unchanging truth and there was an unchanging, eternal world which was the home of such truths. Our inner self, our soul, has knowledge of such eternal truths because it too belongs to and has its home in that eternal world. When the body dies the soul, at long last, can escape the body and return to its real home the eternal spiritual world. These are powerful ideas and intriguing arguments. They influenced many religious traditions and continue in various forms to be part of the views and beliefs which influence people today.

Christ's resurrection

Pupils might also look into the story which is central to the Christian tradition which is that Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead. As well as redemption many Christians take from this event the belief that as one man was resurrected so all might be resurrected. Death had been defeated. Eternal life awaited those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. Pupils might enquire into the various arguments both for and against the belief that Jesus rose from the dead. For example, Jesus' body had disappeared and no trace of it could be found. Jesus' followers in different locations and at different times, sometimes alone, but sometimes in the company of others reported seeing, hearing and touching Jesus. The disciples had been demoralised because their leader had been cruelly put to death. However, within weeks they had become courageous spokesmen giving their lives, literally in some cases, proclaiming that Jesus had risen from the dead. If the resurrection wasn't true where did such conviction come from?

On the other side of the argument pupils might be asked to consider inconsistencies in the gospel story as to who actually saw what and when. Could the missing body be more simply an act of theft which the disciples knew nothing about? Was the tomb story a later invention and Jesus' body, as was the fate of many, simply dumped in a mass grave? How much weight can be given to the claim that the resurrection appearances were real encounters with a person who had died and was now alive or were they vivid mental illusions, experienced by people who were in a state of extreme grief, fear and perhaps guilt that they had not stood by their master to the end? Why do some of the resurrection appearances resemble so closely pagan stories of appearances of gods or of wise sages? Is it just a coincidence that, at the time, many stories existed of gods or heroes who were said to have died and returned to life again like Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Orpheus and Dionysus? The purpose of such an enquiry, of course, is not to undermine faith but to give young people an opportunity to begin to think about and discuss arguments and views which they will inevitably encounter in later life.

Pupils might also explore contemporary claims that out-of-body and near-death experiences while not providing a proof do suggest that there is a life after death. For many people these experiences confirm their view that human beings are dualistic, that is humans consist of two parts, a body and a soul. This view can be found in Plato, Descartes and in many religious traditions. The experience of coming out of the body appears to provide evidence that there is something which can separate from the body and which can, from time to time, come out. When it does we continue to see, think and can even sometimes move about. Is this evidence that

we do have a soul and that the soul can survive separate from the body? Or is it little more than a temporary mental illusion?

Pupils might explore the argument that our sense of self is a mental construct. Our eyes do not really see the world. Our eyes pick up data which is passed to the brain. It is the brain that really does the work. The world we see is a construct produced by the brain. The view of the world our brain normally gives us is one at eye level, so we get the impression we are seeing the world through our eyes. But the brain could just as easily give us a view of the world not five feet from the ground but 10 feet from the ground. If our brain did construct such a view we would have the impression that our body was walking along while our true self was floating above watching what our body was doing. In other words, we would have an out-of-body experience. Is this more likely to explain what is going on? Or is it too farfetched? Is it more likely that we do have a soul and that from time to time our soul does come out of the body? Is it more likely that near death while experiencing a lack of oxygen our brain malfunctions and gives us the impression we are being drawn down a tunnel on a journey to another life? Or, is it more likely that at such times our soul really does leave the body and begins a journey but after a while realises the time is not right and so returns to the body?

Reincarnation

Pupils might also explore the belief that not only is there a life after death but that all of us have experienced many lives and that we will live and die many times. The belief in reincarnation or rebirth is not confined to Eastern religious traditions like Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism. Many people in the West including people who self-identify themselves as Christians also believe in reincarnation.

Pupils may look into the argument that some children from a very early age show a remarkable capacity to play the piano, or an ability to paint, or speak a foreign language. Where does such knowledge or skill come from? Reincarnation supplies an answer. When reincarnated into a new body although all knowledge of our previous life is deleted some parts unknown to us might be retained. A child's flair for playing the piano might exist because in a previous life they were an accomplished piano player.

Many stories are told of people claiming to have lived a previous life. Often such stories involve vague references to being an Egyptian princess, or being a nobleman at the court of King Louis the XVI, or serving on HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar. Such claims may easily be dismissed as memories an individual has retained from Hollywood films or historical novels the watching or reading of which they have forgotten. However, there are cases of very young children who have specific and detailed knowledge of what they believe to be a previous life. On investigation they appear to have remarkable knowledge of another person's life which is very difficult to explain. Is such knowledge merely lucky coincidence? Has the child been deliberately drilled to recall such detail? Can such cases be explained as being a deliberate fraud involving both the child and several adults to present false evidence? If so, what would be the motive?

(f) Do animals have rights?

This topic is best undertaken by exploring the arguments and evidence for and against the claim that animals have rights focusing particular attention on two religious traditions. A school, for example, might choose to teach this topic with respect to just Christianity and Buddhism. It is not recommended that a school

should attempt to teach about the different views adopted by five or six religions. It is unlikely pupils will grasp the subtle and sometimes very different views expressed by people across five or six religions but will simply confuse them together. The attempt to cover too many religions requires the digestion of too much information *about* religion leaving insufficient time for effective learning from religion. The recommendation is that fewer things should be taught in order that great depth can be achieved.

Pupils might learn that in the past the standard position adopted by many Christians was that animals have no rights. Humans were regarded as superior to animals and that animal rights or welfare was not an important concern. For example, Thomas Aquinas regarded humans as the peak of creation. Man was made on the sixth day as the climax of creation and was given 'dominion over the fish of the sea...', (Gen 1:26). Humans 'could reason' and had a soul whereas animals were merely dumb beasts and had no soul. Aquinas' view was that there was a 'natural law' which meant that animals naturally hunted and ate each other and that humans were following the moral 'natural law' if they also hunted and killed animals.

However, an important tradition in Christianity is to show compassion and concern wherever there is suffering particularly for those who are innocent and cannot defend themselves. For example pupils might be taught that the view of the 12th century friar St Francis of Assisi was that all animals were God's creatures. Because of this they must have worth and value in the eyes of God and so we were not at liberty to do what we liked to animals.

Cardinal John Henry Newman in the 19th century adopted a similar position claiming that, 'Animals have done us no harm and have no power of resistance. There is something so very dreadful...in tormenting those who cannot defend themselves, who are utterly in our power.' Pupils should learn that most Christians today adopt this more sensitive and compassionate view of animals. However, they may not formally talk about 'animal rights' on the grounds that 'rights' come with responsibilities. The idea of rights, it might be argued is appropriate when applied to humans so that with human rights there are also human responsibilities. However, it might be argued that the idea of 'animal rights' is also a useful concept to be applied to animals.

Pupils might explore Buddhist attitudes to animals which has a long tradition of showing loving-kindness and of doing no harm to all living things including animals. Buddhists see human and non-human life as closely related as a soul may be reborn in a human body or in a non-human body. The soul that inhabits a human or an animal ultimately has a Buddha-nature. Buddhism also teaches that cruel or violent action against an animal, or of any kind, will result in bad karma and this will have an effect in one's next life or lives. The principle of right livelihood also would be understood to mean for most Buddhists that they should avoid work which involved cruelty to or the killing of animals.

Pupils might learn that research into animal behaviour suggests that many animals may well be much more human-like than has been appreciated in the past. For example, the lives of animals like great apes show a distinct social life, higher levels of intelligence than was thought, clear evidence of fear and mental trauma and protective kindness to others in the group. Is this information relevant when it comes to deciding how animals should be treated?

Many arguments used by animal rights campaigners today, are based on the utilitarian pleasure / pain principle. Simply put, this means that pleasure is good while pain is wrong. It doesn't matter if the pain is felt by a human or by an animal. It only matters, 'Can it feel pain?' and if the creature can then it is wrong to inflict pain on them. Pupils might be invited to consider how well this principle works. For example, is the pleasure enjoyed by humans if they were allowed to fox hunt outweighed by pain the fox experiences by being chased and finally being put to death? If medical research which causes pain to many animals' results in a cure, does the cure of human beings from sickness and pain outweigh the suffering of the animals that were experimented on? What do scientists do to minimise the suffering of animals they experiment on? For example, if animals are anaesthetised before they are experimented on does that make it morally acceptable or just better but still not morally acceptable? Is it acceptable to kill animals to provide food if they are killed as painlessly as possible? If animals like chickens are kept in large numbers do they have rights when it comes to their living conditions? Do animals have a right not to have any pain at all inflicted on them by humans? Why is it that animals in the wild don't seem to enjoy 'rights' when it comes to other animals? What 'rights' does a gazelle have when it is stalked by a cheetah? Is the claim that animals have rights 'self-evidently' true? Do animals have God given rights? If they do is there evidence for this in scripture?

(g) Is fame a worthwhile goal?

Through this topic pupils might explore whether being famous is a worthwhile goal or aspiration in life. Does it lead to a proper sense of satisfaction and fulfillment in life? Is it the case that really there are much simpler hopes and expectations in life, (for example, the respect of others, the companionship of good friends, a sense of personal self-worth) which are much more important if one is to feel truly happy and content with life?

Pupils might explore the idea of what being 'content with life' means. This might involve enquiring into the idea that it goes beyond merely being happy now. That the word 'happy' is related to the idea of 'happen stance' so that happiness depends on the coming and going of events in one's life. Happiness is then a transient experience which goes up or down depending on what happens to you. The feeling of being 'content with life' however is a much more constant and lasting experience. It has to do with a feeling that you have or are living life well, that one's life has an enduring worth which, when you stop to think about it, provides, without being smug, a deep sense of satisfaction. The ancient Greeks would have called this feeling 'eudaimonia'. Today the word eudaimonia might be translated as 'well-being'. It has the sense of having lived a worthwhile and virtuous life. It has the sense of having done something with one's life which one can look back on and feel you have achieved something or have done something which is of real value. Pupils might be invited to consider and discuss these ideas. Is fame a rather trivial goal? Is there not a much deeper satisfaction to be found in doing something with your life which contributes to something much bigger than just yourself?

Part of the enquiry might look into when people say they want to be famous is this

really their main goal? Is it the case that fame may be associated with other things, for example, wealth, possessions, attention, membership of an 'in-crowd' and fame itself is not what is wanted, but rather the full package that is thought to come with fame?

Is fame the new religion? Do we live in a society which too often fails to celebrate talent or ability, but puts too much store in fame itself? With the growth in opportunity for people to become famous, by appearing on reality TV shows like 'Big Brother', the increase in the number of magazines about the lives of the famous, the increased opportunity to self-promote oneself for example by posting images of oneself on YouTube has this resulted in 'being famous' being given too high a status? Do people who achieve fame, often find no real satisfaction and can often be living miserably unhappy lives? Is it that they are always seeking attention and they are never satisfied? Or is it the case that they recognise that what they have done in life is rather shallow and are dissatisfied that they have not achieved something more? Is that why so many of the famous have sought satisfaction in alcohol or drugs or suicide?

Pupils might be encouraged to enquire into the meaning of Jesus' saying, 'What will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and but losses his soul?' (Mt 16:26, Mk 8:36, Lk 9:25). What does Jesus mean by the expression 'loses his soul'? Is this Jesus teaching that we are called to achieve something with our lives? If we just live life serving only our own wishes and needs then would we have failed? Pupils might be invited to consider the claim made by Christianity and by other religions that we are answerable for how we have lived life.

(h) Should one give to others?

A feature of many religions is the claim that a person should actively give to others whose needs are greater than their own. This principle of being a generous and giving person is enshrined in the practices of some religious traditions. For example, pupils might enquire into the practice of Zakat which is one of the five pillars of Islam. Many Muslims regard the act of giving as a daily expectation they have of themselves. They freely reach into their pocket and give to others regarding such generosity as entirely natural and as just something one ought to do. Many Muslims would be appalled if a person gave but then made something of a show or made an announcement about their giving in an attempt to gain credit for their generosity.

This attitude to life is closely associated with the practice of the Prophet Muhammad. There are stories told which pupils may learn about of Muhammad and his closest companions living remarkably frugal lives and using what money they have for the benefit of others. Generosity is also a Qur'anic theme and is enshrined in the practice of Zakat. In Islam whatever wealth one is fortunate to acquire is seen as being granted to you by the will of God. Most of that money, (97.5%) you may keep but 2.5% does not really belong to you – it belongs to God and it is God's will that it should go to the poor. This money is given to the poor annually in the form of Zakat. Zakat isn't the same as giving in the sense of charity. Charity is a freewill choice. Zakat is a duty. Like obligatory prayer (Salah) Zakat has to do with cleansing. If a Muslim kept all their wealth and did not give Zakat then all of their wealth would be seen as contaminated and unclean. The giving of Zakat is not only helpful to others it purifies the money which you keep and makes it clean.

Pupils may also enquire into the importance attached to being a giving person in Christianity. The story of the Poor Widow (Mk 12:41) might be explored. Also Mt 6:3 suggests that if a person gives only in order to make a display of their generosity far

from doing good, they would have committed a sin. The action of giving itself is not good enough. One must do so with the right intention – with an honest heart. The practice of the first Christians described in Acts 4:32-37 suggests a community of people who were willing to share all that they had giving everything to the community so that no one had to worry or live in need. The Christian tradition of tithing might also be explored. Some might regard tithing as supporting the church they attend. However, many churches actively engage in supporting welfare work in the local community and the money and the voluntary work they receive from members of the church often make it possible for them to engage in this welfare work.

Pupils might be encouraged to express their views about the merit or otherwise of giving. For example, pupils might discuss whether or not Zakat is a good idea. Does the fact that it is obligatory mean that it fails to be a freely chosen good action? Is it an excellent idea because it gets people into the habit of giving so that generosity becomes second nature? Is it inadequate as by having a fixed percentage which is the same for all the rich just get richer and the poor always stay poor?

Pupils might also consider the claim that those who are nearest to us have a greater claim on our generosity than people who are far away or who are strangers. The idea that 'charity begins at home' is often interpreted as meaning, 'We should help the poor that are near to us and not provide handouts to people far away'. Is this view mean spirited or is it a very sensible attitude to adopt?

Pupils might also be encouraged to think about the reward and personal satisfaction people often experience if they live life generously. Literature recounts stories like that of Silas Marner which reflects true life. Silas was a reclusive miser who hoarded his gold. However, he finds a much happier existence when he abandons being a miser but turns instead into a giver who commits himself to the welfare and upbringing of a small child.

Enquiry based KS3 topics

Examples of possible KS3 enquiry topics are:

What is God like?
Is there a God?
Why is there so much suffering in the world?
Do science and religion contradict each other?
Is there a life after death?
Why did Jesus have to die?
Did Jesus rise from the dead?
Do animals have rights?
Is fame a worthwhile goal?
Should we give to others?
Reincarnation – what is the evidence?
Money and capitalism – has it all gone wrong?
Is Zakat a good idea?
If there is one God why are there so many religions?
Is religion good for women?
Right and wrong – how do we decide?

These enquiry topics are not a list of topics that must be taught in Key Stage 3. They are examples of topic titles schools may find helpful.

Key Stage 4 Programme of Study

In Dudley at Key Stage 4 pupils should study at least two religious traditions one of which must be Christianity and should make use of the KS3 programme of study. Alternatively pupils should study a nationally accredited external examination course, for example, a full or short course in Religious Studies. The specifications for these courses are set down by the examination boards.

Schools may if they wish begin a nationally accredited course in Y9 and continue with it through into Y10 and Y11. It should be considered helpful pupils may be entered for an external examination at the end of Y10. However, the recommendation is that pupils should be entered for the examination in Y11. If pupils are entered for the examination in Y10 and are successful they should continue to receive religious education in Y11. This is because RE remains a statutory requirement for all pupils in both Y10 and Y11. Schools may wish to consider providing for pupils religious education by starting pupils on an AS level Religious Studies course.

Post 16 Programme of Study

Legal Requirements

The legal requirement is that all registered pupils in Community and Voluntary Controlled schools are to receive RE in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus. This includes schools with post-16 students. Religious education in Voluntary Aided schools is determined by the governors in accordance with the school's trust deeds. Academies should have the requirements for religious education stated in their funding agreement and should teach religious education in accordance with those arrangements.

Students that are undertaking a national accredited external examination course, for example, AS Level in Religious Studies, A2 Level for those who previously attained AS, International Baccalaureate, A level General Studies, etc., will be deemed to be meeting the requirements of the agreed syllabus

Alternatively to meet the expectation of the agreed syllabus schools may provide the equivalent of two to three days per year (10-15 hours per year) to provide opportunities for debates, discussion, visiting speakers, visits, workshops which enquire into topics which contain a religious theme. On such days students might be explore topics like:

Does God do magic?
Are we innately religious?
What was God doing before the Big Bang?
A Multi-Faith society – is it working?
Affluenza – are you infected?
Have you got a conscience?
Have you got a soul?
Should you leave your principles at home when you go to work?
The prayer experiment – did it work?
Does God love the honest doubter?

Buddhism glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
anatta	anatman	<i>No self or no soul.</i> Denial of a real or permanent self.
annica	anitya	<i>Impermanence, transience.</i> Instability of all things, including the self
bhikkhu	bhikshu	Fully ordained Buddhist monk.
bhikkhuni	bhikshuni	Fully ordained Buddhist nun.
bodhi tree		The tree under which the Buddha realised Enlightenment. It is known as the Tree of Wisdom.
bodhistta		<i>A Wisdom Being.</i> One intent on becoming, or destined to become, a Buddha. Gotama, before his Enlightenment as the historical Buddha.
bodhisattva		A being destined for Enlightenment, who postpones final attainment of Buddhahood in order to help living beings.
Buddha		<i>Awakened or Enlightened One.</i>
dhamma		<i>Universal law or Ultimate truth.</i> The teachings of the Buddha.
Dalai Lama		<i>Great Ocean.</i> Spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people.
dukka	duhkha	<i>Suffering, unsatisfactoriness or imperfection.</i> The nature of existence according to the first Noble Truth.
Eightfold Path		List of eight steps which are a way of living.
Enlightenment		Understanding the truth about the way things are.
Four Noble Truths		The four basic truths on which the Buddha's teaching is founded.

Buddhism glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
Gotama	Gautama	Family name of the Buddha.
karma	kamma	<i>Action.</i> Intentional actions that affect one's circumstances in this and future lives. The Buddha's insistence that the effect depends on volition marks the Buddhist treatment of karma as different from the Hindu understanding of karma
Mahayana		A principal school of Buddhism, established in Tibet and China.
mala	juzu	String of 108 beads used in Buddhist practice.
mantras		Sacred chants which Buddhists believe have special power.
mudra	mudda	Ritual gesture, as illustrated by the hands of Buddha images.
nirvana	nibbana	<i>Blowing out</i> of the fires of greed, hatred and ignorance, and the state of secure perfect peace that follows
samsara		<i>Everyday life.</i> The continual round of birth and death which can be transcended by following the Eightfold Path.
sangha		<i>Community or Assembly.</i> Often used for the community of monks and nuns in Theravada countries. In the Mahayana countries, the Sangha includes lay members.
Siddattha	Siddhartha	<i>Wish-fulfilled.</i> The personal name of the historical Buddha.
stupa	thupa / cetiya	Burial mound or mound containing relics.
Theravada		<i>Way of the elders.</i> A principal school of Buddhism established in Sri Lanka and South East Asia. Also found in the West.
Tipitaka	Tripitaka	<i>Three baskets.</i> The threefold collection of sacred texts.
vihara		Dwelling place. Monastery. A place of worship in Buddhism.

Buddhism glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
vinaya		The rules of discipline of monastic life
Wesak		<i>Buddha Day.</i> Name of a festival and a month. On the full moon of Wesak (in May or June), the birth, Enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha took place, although some schools celebrate only the birth at this time, e.g. Zen.
Zen		<i>Meditation.</i> A school of Mahayana Buddhism that developed in China and Japan.



Inside the Fa Yu Buddhist monastery in Brierley Hill.

Christian glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
AD	Anno Domini	<i>In the year of our Lord.</i> The Christian calendar dates from the estimated date of the birth of Jesus.
Absolution		The pronouncement by a priest of the forgiveness of sins.
Advent		<i>Coming.</i> The period beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (40 days before Christmas in the Eastern Orthodox tradition). A time for spiritual preparation for Christmas.
agape		Christian love. The New Testament word to express kindness to others but expecting nothing back in return. Often called unconditional love.
altar	communion table Holy table	Used for Eucharist, Mass, Lord's Supper. Some denominations refer to it as the Holy table or communion table
Anglican		Churches in full communion with the See of Canterbury. Their origins and traditions are linked to the Church of England.
Ascension		The event, 40 days after the Resurrection when Jesus 'ascended into heaven' (see Lk2 and Acts1).
atonement		Reconciliation between God and humanity. Restoring a relationship broken by sin.
baptism		Rite of initiation involving immersion in, or sprinkling or pouring of, water
Baptist		A member of the Baptist church, which grew out of the Anabapist movement during the 16 th century reformation. A Christian who practices believer's baptism.
baptistry		Building or pool used for baptism, particularly by immersion. Part of a church, where baptism takes place.
BC	Before Christ	Period of history before the estimated birth of Jesus Christ
believer's baptism		The baptism of people who are old enough to understand the meaning of the rite.
Bishop		A member of the clergy set apart to oversee a number of priests and their churches forming a diocese. (mainly Anglican, RC and Orthodox). Acts under the supervision of an Archbishop.
chapel		Name formerly used by several non-conformist denominations, eg. Baptists, Methodists for their place of worship
charismatic		A modern movement within the Church emphasising spiritual gifts, such as healing or speaking with tongues.
Chrismation		The Orthodox second sacrament of initiation by anointing with chrism (a special oil). Performed at the same time as baptism. Anointing with oil, eg. healing or coronation.

Christian glossary		
preferred form	main variant	Explanation
Christ	Messiah	The anointed one. Messiah is used in the Jewish tradition to refer to the expected leader sent by God, who will bring salvation to God's people. Jesus' followers applied this title to him, and its Greek equivalent, Christ. It is the source of the words Christian and Christianity.
Christmas		Festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ (25 December, in most Churches)
chrismons		Abbreviation for 'Christ monograms'. Decorative symbols depicting aspects of Christ and the Christian faith.
church		The whole community of Christians. The building in which Christians worship. A particular denomination.
citadel		The building in which members of the Salvation Army meet for worship.
confession		<i>Contrition</i> , penance. One of seven sacraments observed by some Churches whose priest confidentially hears a person's confession. An admission, by a Christian of wrong-doing. A particular official statement of Christ.
confirmation		Rite by which someone is admitted to full communion and membership of the Church (principally Anglican).
consubstantiation		Doctrine of the Eucharist associated with Martin Luther, which holds that after consecration, the substances of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and of the bread and wine co-exist in union with each other.
creed		Summary statement of religious beliefs, often recited in worship, especially the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.
crucifixion		Roman method of executing criminals and traitors by fastening them to a cross until they died of asphyxiation, used in the case of Jesus and many who opposed the Romans.
dedication		Service of dedicating babies or young children to God, used by some denominations, e.g. Baptists as an alternative to infant baptism.
denomination		A group. Christianity has many denominations, e.g. Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Roman Catholics.
Easter		Central Christian festival in memory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
Ecumenicism	Oikoumene	Movement within the Church towards co-operation and eventual unity.
Eucharist		<i>Thanksgiving</i> . A service celebrating the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, using elements of bread and wine (see Holy Communion).

Christian glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
evangelical		Group or church, placing particular emphasis on the Gospel and the scriptures as the sole authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
font		Receptacle to hold water in baptism.
Free Churches		Non-conformist denominations, free from state control (used of 20 Churches).
Good Friday		The Friday in Holy Week. Commemorates the day Jesus died on the cross.
Gospel		Good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. An account of Jesus' life and work.
heaven		The place, or state, in which souls will be united with God after death.
hell		The place, or state, in which souls will be separated from God after death.
Holy Communion		Central liturgical service observed by most Churches (see Eucharist, Mass, Lord's Supper). Recalls the last meal of Jesus, and celebrates his sacrificial and saving death.
Holy Spirit		The third person of the Holy Trinity. Active as divine presence and power in the world, and in dwelling in believers to make them like Christ and empower them to do God's will.
Holy Week		The week before Easter, when Christians recall the last week of Jesus' life on earth.
icon	ikon	Painting or mosaic of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, a saint, or a Church feast. Used as an aid to devotion, usually in the Orthodox tradition.
iconostasis		Screen, covered with icons, used in Eastern Orthodox churches to separate the sanctuary from the nave.
incarnation		The doctrine that God took human form in Jesus Christ. It is also the belief that God in Christ is active in the Church and in the world.
Jesus Christ		The central figure of Christian history and devotion. The second person of the Trinity.
justification by faith		The doctrine that God forgives ('treats as just') those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ.
lectern		Stand supporting the Bible, often in the shape of an eagle.
Lent		The forty day period of abstinence and preparation leading up to Easter.

Christian glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
liturgy		Service of worship according to a prescribed ritual, such as Evensong or Eucharist.
Lord's Supper		Alternative term for the Eucharist in some Churches (mainly non-conformist).
Mass		Term for the Eucharist, used by the Roman Catholic and other Churches.
Maundy Thursday		The Thursday in Holy Week. Commemorates the Last Supper.
Methodist		A Christian who belongs to the Methodist Church which came into existence through the work of John Wesley in the 18 th century.
minister		Servant. Used principally in the Methodist Church to describe a clergyman set apart to oversee one church or a group of churches.
non-conformist		Protestant Christian bodies which became separated from the established Church of England in the 17 th .
Ordination		The 'laying on of hands' on priests and deacons by a bishop.
Palm Sunday		The Sunday before Easter commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
patriarch		Title for principal Eastern Orthodox bishops. Also used for early Israelite leaders such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
Pentecost	Whitsun	The day when early Christians received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Also described as the birthday of the Christian Church.
Pope		The Bishop of Rome, head of the Roman Catholic Church.
Presbyterian		A member of a Church that is governed by elders or 'presbyters', the national Church of Scotland.
priest		Used mainly in the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions. A man or woman set apart to be Christ's representative on earth and help bring people to God.
Protestant		That part of the Church which became distinct from the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches when their members professed the centrality of the Bible and other beliefs.

Christian glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
pulpit		A raised platform from which sermons are preached.
purgatory		In some traditions, a condition or state in which souls receive spiritual cleansing after death, in preparation for heaven.
Quaker		A member of the Religious Society of Friends established through the work of George Fox in the 17 th century.
redemption		Derived from the practice of paying the price of a slave's freedom; and so, the work of Jesus Christ in setting people free through his death.
Reformation		A 16 th century reform movement that led to the formation of Protestant Churches.
resurrection		The rising from the dead of Jesus Christ on the third day after the crucifixion. The rising from the dead of believers at the Last Day. The new, or risen, life of Christians.
Roman Catholic		That part of Church owing loyalty to the Bishop of Rome, as distinct from Orthodox and Protestant Churches.
sacrament		An outward sign of an inward blessing, as in baptism or the Eucharist.
tithing		The practice of giving one tenth of one's income to the Church on a regular basis.
transubstantiation		Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the Mass, which states that at the words of consecration, the substance of the bread and wine becomes the substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and that he is thus present on the altar.
Trinity		Three persons in one God; doctrine of the threefold nature of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
unction	sacrament of the sick	The anointing with oil of a sick or dying person.
United Reformed Church		A Church formed by the union of English Congregationalists with the Presbyterian Church of England, and subsequently the Reformed Association of the Churches of Christ.
Vatican		The residence of the Pope in Rome, and the administrative centre of the Roman Catholic Church.
vicar		Usually used to describe an Anglican priest who is responsible for a church and its parish.

Hinduism glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
ahimsa	ahinsa	<i>Not killing.</i> Non-violence, respect for life.
arti	arati	Welcoming ceremony in which auspicious articles such as incense and lamps are offered to the deity or to saintly people.
ashram	asram	A place set up for spiritual development.
atman	atma	<i>Self.</i> The real self, the soul.
Aum	Om	The sacred symbol and sound representing the ultimate. The most sacred of Hindu words.
avatar		<i>One who descends.</i> Refers to the descent of a deity, most commonly Vishnu. Sometimes it is translated as incarnation which, although inaccurate, may be the best English word available.
Bhagavad Gita		<i>The Song of the Lord.</i> Spoken by Krishna, this is the most important scripture for most Hindus. Tradition dates it back to 3,000 years BCE, though most scholars attribute it to the first millennium BCE.
bhajan	bhajana	Devotional hymn or song.
bhakti		<i>Devotion or love.</i> Devotional form of Hinduism.
bhakti-yoga		The path of loving devotion, aimed at developing pure love of God.
Brahma		A Hindu deity, considered one of the Trimurti, and in charge of creative power. Not to be confused with Brahman or Brahim.
Brahman		The ultimate reality or the all-pervading reality. That from which everything emanates, in which it rests and into which it is ultimately dissolved.
brahmin		The first of the four varnas. The principal social groupings from which priests are drawn. Some writers rather confusingly use the spelling 'brahman' and the meaning only becomes clear in the context of a few sentences.
dharma		<i>Religion or religious duty</i> is the usual translation into English, but literally it means the intrinsic quality of the self or that which sustains one's existence.

Hinduism glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
Diwali	Diwali Dipavali Deepavali	Festival of lights at the end of one year the beginning of the new year according to one Hindu calendar.
Durga		Female deity. A form of the goddess Parvati, wife of Shiva.
Ganesha	Ganesh	A Hindu deity portrayed with an elephant's head – a sign of strength. The deity who removes obstacles.
Ganga		<i>The Ganges</i> . The most famous of all sacred rivers of India
guru		Spiritual teacher, preceptor or enlightener.
Hanuman		The monkey warrior who faithfully served Rama and Sita. Also called Pavansuta (son of the wind).
Havan		The fire ritual which forms the basis of many Hindu rituals used at weddings and other ceremonial occasions. The ceremony or act of worship in which offerings of ghee and grains are made into fire.
Holi		The festival of colours, celebrated in Spring.
janeu	janoi	Sacred thread worn by Hindus who study under a guru.
Janmashtami	Janmashtmi	The birthday of Krishna, celebrated on the eighth day of the waning moon in the month of Badra.
jati		Caste is the usual translation, meaning occupational kinship group.
jnana-yoga	gyan-yoga	The path of knowledge, that aims at liberation.
Kali	Kaali	Name given to that power of God which delivers justice – often represented by the goddess Kali (a form of Durga).
karma		<i>Action</i> . Refers to the law of cause and effect
karma-yoga		The path of self-realisation through dedicating the fruit of one's work to God.
kirtan		<i>Songs of praise</i> . Corporate devotional singing usually accompanied by musical instruments.

Hinduism glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
Krishna		One of the most popular of all Hindu deities in contemporary Britain. Usually considered to be an avatar of Vishnu. His teachings are found in the Bhagavad Gita.
kshatriya		Second of the four varnas of traditional Hindu society. The ruling warrior class.
Lakshmi		The goddess of fortune.
Mahabharata		The Hindu epic scripture that relates the story of the five Pandava princes. It includes the Bhagavad Gita.
mala		Circle of stringed beads of wood or wool used in meditation.
mandir		<i>Temple</i> . The building in which Hindus worship.
mantra		<i>That which delivers the mind</i> . Refers to a short sacred text or prayer, often recited repetitiously.
maya		<i>Not this</i> . Usually, it refers to illusion particularly where the permanent soul identifies itself with temporary matter, e.g. the body, etc. It can also mean power.
moksha	moksa	Ultimate liberation from the process of transmigration, the continuous cycle of birth and death.
murti		<i>Form</i> . The image or deity used as a focus of worship. 'Idol' should definitely not be used, and 'statue' may also cause offence.
Navaratri	Navaratra	The nine nights festival preceding Dassehra and held in honour of the goddess Durga
Parvati		The consort of Shiva, also known by other names such as Durga, Devi, etc.
Prahlada	Prahalada	A great devotee of Vishnu, connected with the festival of Holi.

Hinduism glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
puja	pooja	<i>Worship</i> . General term referring to a variety of practices in the home or mandir.
purana		<i>Ancient</i> . Part of the Smriti scripture. Contains many of the well-known stories of Hinduism.
raja yoga	raj yoga	path of self-control and meditation to realise God.
rakhi	raakhi	A bracelet, usually made out of silk or cotton, tied to give protection and to strengthen the bond of mutual love.
Raksha Bandhan		The festival when women tie a decorative bracelet on bond of mutual love.
Rama		The incarnation of the Lord, and hero of the Ramayana (avoid using the variant 'Ram').
Ramayana	Ramayan	The Hindu epic scripture that relates the story of Rama and Sita, composed by the sage Valmiki thousands of years ago.
Ravana		The ten-headed demon king featured in the Ramayana epic, defeated by Rama.
Rig Veda		The first scripture of Hinduism, containing spiritual and scientific knowledge.
sadhu	sadhu	Holy man, ascetic
samsara	sansara	The world – the place where transmigration, the soul's passage through a series of lives in different species occurs.
sannyasa		The state of renunciation, the fourth stage of life.
sarvodaya		Community based projects.
sannyasin	samyasin	One who has given up worldly affairs and attachments and has entered the fourth stage of life, often as a mendicant.
Sanskrit		Sacred language of the Hindu scriptures.
seva	sewa	service, either to the divine or to humanity.

Hinduism glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
shakti	sakti	energy or power, especially of a Hindu feminine deity.
Shiva	Siva	<i>Auspicious one.</i> A major Hindu god. The 'Destroyer' or 'Transformer'. One of the <u>Trimurti</u> .
Shivaratri	Sivaratri	The annual festival celebrated in February or March in honour of Shiva. Also called Mahashivaratri.
shruti	srti	<i>That which is remembered.</i> Applicable to Hindu scriptures other than the Vedas.
Sita	Seeta	The divine consort of Rama.
smriti		<i>That which is heard.</i> A term specifically applied to the four Vedas, including the Upanishads. Some Hindus believe that smriti is subservient to shruti, but other Hindus consider them to have equal importance.
swami	svami	<i>Controller.</i> Sometimes more specifically, Goswami, one who can control their senses. An honorific title applied to a religious teacher or holy person, particularly the sannyasi.
trimurti		The three deities. Refers to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, who personify and control all matter. They represent and control the three functions of creation, preservation and destruction. 'Trinity' should be avoided.
Upanayana		Ceremony when the sacred thread is tied to mark the start of learning with a guru.



A display which shows an image of Ganesha and Lakshmi. Why is there no image of Brahman?

Islam glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
adhan		Call to prayer. From the same root. Muezzin, one who makes the call to prayer.
akhirah		Everlasting life after death – the hereafter.
Allah		The Islamic name for God in the Arabic language. Used in preference to the word God, this Arabic term is singular, has no plural, nor is it associated with masculine, feminine or neuter characteristics.
Arafat		A plain, a few kilometres from Makkah, where pilgrims gather to worship, pray and ask for forgiveness. This takes place on the ninth day of the Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah, the day before Id-ul-Adha.
Bismillah		<i>In the name of Allah.</i>
burqa	burka	An outer garment worn by women in some Islamic traditions to cover their bodies when in public.
dhikr		<i>Remembrance.</i> Remembrance of Allah in one's heart or by reciting His names or sections from the Qur'an.
Dhul-Hijjah		The month of the Hajj, last month of the Islamic year.
fard		Obligatory duty according to divine law, e.g. offering salah five times a day.
Fatihah		<i>The Opener:</i> Surah 1 of the Qur'an. Recited at least 17 times daily during the five times of salah. Also known as <i>The Essence of the Qur'an.</i>
fatwa		The legal guidance of a pious, just, knowledgeable Muslim scholar and jurist, based on the Qur'an, sunnah and Islamic shari'ah.
five pillars		The five main requirements of Islam, i.e. to declare the creed, pray regularly, fast, give alms and participate in the pilgrimage to Makkah.
Hadith		The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, as recounted by family and companions. These are a major source of Islamic law.
hafiz		Someone who knows the whole Qur'an by heart.

Islam glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
hajj		Annual pilgrimage to Makkah, which each Muslim must undertake at least once in a lifetime if he or she has the health and wealth. A Muslim male who has completed hajj is called a hajji, and a female, hajjiah.
halal		Any action or thing which is permitted or lawful.
haram		Anything unlawful or not permitted.
hijab		<i>Veil</i> . Often used to describe the head scarf or modest dress worn by women, who are required to cover everything except face and hands in the sight of anyone other than immediate family.
Hijrah		<i>Emigration</i> . The emigration of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Madinah in 622 CE. The Islamic calendar commences from this event.
ibadah		All acts of worship. Any permissible action performed with the intention to obey Allah.
Ibrahim		<i>Abraham</i> . A Prophet of God to whom the 'scrolls' were given.
id		<i>Recurring happiness</i> . A religious holiday, a feast for thanking God and celebrating a happy occasion.
Id-ul-Adha		Celebration of the sacrifice, commemorating the Prophet Araham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isma'il for God. Also known as <i>the Greater Id</i> .
Id-ul-Fitr		Celebration of breaking the fast on the day after Ramadan ends, which is also the first day of Shawal, the tenth Islamic month. Also known as <i>the Lesser Id</i> and as Sheker Bayram (Turkish) meaning the sugar feast.
Ihram		The state or condition entered into to perform hajj or umrah. Also the name of the plain white unsewn cloths worn by male pilgrims to indicate the brotherhood, equality and purity of the pilgrim. For women the dress of ihram consists of their normal modest clothing.
Imam		<i>Leader</i> . A person who leads the communal prayer. In Shi'ah Islam, Imam is also the title of Ali and his successors.
Islam		Peace attained through willing obedience to God's guidance.

Islam glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
Isha'il	Ishmael	Son of the Prophet Muhammad
jihad		personal individual struggle against evil in the way of God. It can also be the collected defence of the Muslim community.
jumu'ah		The weekly communal prayer and attendance at the khutbah performed shortly after midday on Friday.
Ka'bah		A cube-shaped structure in the centre of the grand mosque in Makkah. The first house built for the worship of the one, true God.
Khalifah		Successor, inheritor; custodian, vice-regent. A term used in the Qur'an to describe humans' role as God's stewards.
khutbah		<i>Speech</i> . Talk delivered on special occasions such as midday on Friday and Id prayers.
Madinah	Medina	<i>The City of the Prophet</i> . The name given to Yathrib after the Prophet Muhammad migrated there in 622 CE and founded the first Islamic state.
Makkah	Mecca	The city where the Prophet Muhammad was born, and where the Ka'bah is located.
mihrab		Niche or alcove in a mosque wall, indicating the direction of Makkah, towards which all Muslims face in prayer.
Mina		Place near Makkah, where pilgrims stay on the 10 th , 11 th and 12 th of Dhul-Hijjah and perform some of the activities of the hajj.
minbar		Rostrum, platform, dais. The stand from which the Imam delivers the khutbah or speech in the mosque.
mi'raj		The ascent through the heavens of the Prophet Muhammad.
mosque		Place of prostration. The building in which Muslims worship. In Arabic <i>Masjid</i> .
muezzin		Caller to prayer. May be spelt as mu'adhin.

Islam glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
Muhammad		<i>Praised.</i> Name of the final Prophet
Muslim		One who has accepted Islam by professing the shahadah
Muzdalifah		Place where pilgrims on hajj stop for a time after the day they spend at Arafat.
niyyah		<i>Intention.</i> A legally required statement of intent, made before all acts of devotion such as salah, hajj or sawm.
qiblah		Direction which Muslims face when performing prayer towards the Ka'bah.
Qur'an	Koran	That which is read or recited. The divine book revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. God's final revelation to humankind.
rak'ah		A unit of salah, made up of recitation, standing, bowing and two prostrations.
Ramadan		The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, during which fasting is required from just before dawn until sunset, as ordered by God in the Qur'an.
sa'y		Walking or hastening between Safa and Marwah, as part of the hajj, in remembrance of Hagar's search for water for her son Isma'il.
sadaqah		Voluntary payment or good action for charitable purposes.
Safa & Marwah		Two hills in Makkah, near the Ka'bah, now included within the grand mosque.
salah	salam	Prescribe communication with and worship of God, performed under specific conditions, in the manner taught by the Prophet Muhammad and recited in the Arabic language. The five daily times of salah are fixed by God.
sawm		Fasting from just before dawn until sunset. Abstinence is required from all food and drink (including water) as well as smoking and conjugal relations.

Islam glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
sawm		Fasting from just before dawn until sunset. Abstinence is required from all food and drink (including water) as well as smoking and conjugal relations.
shahadah		Declaration of faith, which consists of the statement, 'There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'.
shariah	shari'ah sharia	<i>The straight path.</i> The Islamic law based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.
Shi'ah		<i>Followers.</i> Muslims who believe in the successorship of Ali after the Prophet Muhammad and eleven of his most pious, knowledgeable descendants.
shirk		<i>Association.</i> Regarding anything as being equal or partner to God. Shirk is forbidden in Islam.
subhah		String of beads used to count recitations in worship.
sunnah		Model practices, customs and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. This is found in both the Hadith and the example of the Prophet.
Sunni		Muslims who believe in the successorship of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali after the prophet of Muhammad.
surah		Division of the Quran, 114 in all.
tawaf		Walking seven times around the Ka'bah in worship of Allah. Also, a part of hajj and umrah.
tawhid		Belief in the oneness of God. Absolute monotheism as practiced in Islam.
ummah		Community. World-wide community of Muslims. The nation of Islam.
wudu		Ablution before salah.
zakah		Purification of wealth by payment of annual welfare due. An obligatory act of worship.

Islam glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
Zakat-ul-Fitr		Welfare payment at the end of Ramadan.
Zamzam		Name of the well close to the Ka'bah in Makkah. The water first sprang in answer to Hajar's search and prayers.



Muslims undertaking salah together in Dudley's Central mosque. If a Muslim didn't, or couldn't, regularly undertake salah how might they feel? Why?

Judaism glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
Afikomen		Dessert. Portion of a mayzah eaten near the end of the Seder.
Ark		The focal point of the synagogue containing the Torah scrolls. The Holy Ark or <i>Aron Hakodesh</i> in Hebrew.
Ashkenazim		Jews of Central and Eastern European origin.
Bar Mitzvah		Son of Commandment. A boy's coming of age at 13 years old, usually marked by a synagogue ceremony and family celebration.
Bat Mitzvah		Daughter of the Commandment. As above, but for girls from 12 years old. May be marked differently between communities.
bimah		Raised platform primarily for reading the Torah in the synagogue.
Brit Milah	Berit Milah Bris	<i>Circumcision</i> . Religious rite performed by a qualified mohel on all Jewish boys, usually on the eighth day after birth.
challah	hallah	Enriched bread used particularly on Shabbat and during festivals.
chazan	hazzan cantor	Leader of reading, singing and chanting in the services of some synagogues.
Hagadah	Haggadah	<i>Telling</i> . A book used at Seder.
Halachah		Jewish law or tradition particularly as found in the Talmud.
hanukiah	chanukiah	Nine-branched Hanukkah lamp used at the festival of Hanukkah.
Hasid	Chasid	<i>Pious</i> . Member of the Orthodox movement of Hasidism
Hasidism	Chasidism	A religious and social movement formed in the 18 th century by Israel Baal Shem Tov.
havdalah		<i>Distinction</i> . Ceremony marking the conclusion of Shabbat.

Judaism glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
Hebrew		Ancient Semitic language. The language of the Tenakh and used by Jews for prayer and study. Also, everyday language in Israel.
huppah	chuppah	Canopy used for a wedding ceremony, under which the bride and groom stand.
ketubah	ketubbah	Document that defines rights and obligations within Jewish marriage.
kippah	yamulka capel	Head covering worn during prayers, Torah study, etc. Some followers wear it constantly.
kol nidrei	kol nidre	<i>All vows.</i> Prayer recited on the evening of Yom Kippur.
Kosher	Kasher	Fit, proper. Foods permitted by Jewish dietary laws.
Magen David		<i>Shield of David.</i> Popularly called the Star of David.
matzah	matzot (pl.)	A flat cracker-like bread which has been baked before it rises, used at Pesach.
menorah		seven-branched candelabrum which was lit daily in the Temple.
mezuzah		A scroll placed on doorposts of Jewish homes, containing a section from the Torah and often enclosed in a decorative case.
mikveh		Ritual bath used for immersion of people and objects.
minyan		Quorum of ten men, over Bar Mitzvah age, required for a service. Progressive communities may include women but do not always require a minyan.
mitzvah	mitzvoth (pl.)	Commandment. The Torah contains 613 mitzvot. Commonly used to describe good deeds.
ner tamid		Eternal light. This perpetual light above the Ark.
Noachide laws		Seven laws given to Noah after the flood, which are incumbent on all humankind. These laws form the foundation for a just society.
Pesach	Passover	Festival commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. One of the three biblical festivals. Pesach is celebrated in the spring.

Judaism glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
Purim		Festival commemorating the rescue of Persian Jewry as told in the book of Esther.
rabbi		<i>My teacher.</i> An ordained Jewish teacher. Often the religious leader of a Jewish community.
Rosh Hashanah	Rosh Ha-Shanah	<i>Head of the Year.</i> Jewish New Year.
Seder		<i>Order.</i> A home-based ceremonial meal during Pesach, at which the Exodus from Egypt is recounted using the Hagadah.
Sephardim	Sefardim	Jews originating from Mediterranean countries, especially Spain, North Africa and the Middle East.
Shabbat	Shabbos	Day of spiritual renewal and rest commencing at sunset on Friday, terminating at nightfall on Saturday.
Shavuot		Weeks. One of three pilgrim festivals. Shavuot is celebrated in the summer, seven weeks after Pesach.
Shema		Major Jewish prayer affirming belief in one God. The Shema is found in the Torah.
Shiva		Seven days of intense mourning following the burial of a close relation. During this period, all ordinary work is prohibited.
shofar		Ram's horn blown at the season of Rosh Hashanah.
Siddur		<i>Order.</i> Daily prayer book.
Simchat Torah		Rejoicing of the law. Festival celebrating the completion and recommencement of the cycle of the weekly Torah reading.
sukkah	sukkot (pl.)	Tabernacle, booth. A temporary dwelling used during Sukkot.
Sukkot		One of three biblical pilgrim festivals, Sukkot is celebrated in the autumn.
synagogue	shul	Building used for Jewish public prayer, study and assembly.

Judaism glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
tallit	tallith	Prayer shawl. Four-cornered garment with fringes.
Talmud		An authoritative document containing the Oral Tradition of Rabbinic teaching, codified about 200 CE
tefillin	tephilin phylacteries	Small leather boxes containing passages from the Torah, strapped on the forehead and arm for morning prayers on weekdays.
Tenakh	Tanakh	The Jewish Bible comprising three sections: Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim. (Te, Na, Kh).
Tikkum Olam	Tikun	Care for the world and environment.
Torah		<i>Law, teaching.</i> The Five Books of Moses.
tzedaka		<i>Righteousness.</i> An act of charity.
tzizit	tzitzit	Fringes on the corners of the tallit. Also commonly refers to the fringed undervest worn by some Jewish males.
yad		A hand-held pointer used in reading the Sefer Torah.
Yom Kippur		<i>Day of Atonement.</i> Fast day occurring on the tenth day after Rosh Hashanah.
Zionism		Political movement securing the Jewish return to the land of Israel.



Shabbat or the Sabbath is a day of spiritual renewal and rest. What does that mean? Do we lack spiritual renewal?

Sikhism glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
Akal Purakh		<i>The Eternal One.</i> A designation frequently used of God by Guru Nanak.
Akal Takht	Akal Takhat	<i>Throne of the Eternal.</i> Throne of the Timeless One. Building facing the Golden Temple in Amritsar where Sikhs gather for political purposes.
akhand path		Continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib from beginning to end.
amrit		<i>nectar.</i> Sanctified liquid made of sugar and water, used in initiation ceremonies.
amrit ceremony	amrit sanskar	The Sikh rite of initiation into the Khalsa. Baptism should not be used.
ardas		<i>prayer.</i> The formal prayer offered at most religious acts.
Baisakhi	Vaisakhi	A major Sikh festival celebrating the formation of the Khalsa in 1699 CE.
Bandi Chhorh Divas		<i>Deliverer from prison Day.</i> Sometimes known as the Sikh Divali the festival celebrates the Guru Hargobind's successful efforts to gain the release of 52 Hindu leaders.
chanani	chandni	Canopy over the scriptures, used as a mark of respect.
chauri	chaur	Fan waved over the scriptures, made of yak hairs or nylon. A symbol of the authority of the Guru Granth Sahib. It should not be called a 'fly whisk'.
Dasam Granth		Collection of compositions, some of which are attributed to the tenth Sikh Guru, compiled some years after his death.
grihasti	grihastha	Living life as a householder earning one's own living. Not being a forest dwelling hermit.
gurdwara	gurudwara	Sikh place of worship. Literally the ' <i>doorway to the Guru</i> '.
gurmat		The Guru's guidance.
gurmukh		<i>to face the Guru</i> is the practice of following the "ways of the Guru" instead and following your animal instincts and basic desires of the mind. The opposite of Gurmukh is <u>Manmukh</u> .

Sikhism glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
gurburb	gurpurab	A Guru's anniversary (birth or death). Also used for other anniversaries, eg. Of the installation of the Adi Granth, 1604 CE.
Guru		Teacher. In Sikhism, the title of Guru is reserved for the ten human Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib.
Guru Arjan		The fifth Guru who was the first Sikh martyr (1563-1606)
Guru Gobind Singh	Guru Govind Singh (original name – Guru Gobind Rai)	Tenth Sikh Guru. It is important to note that the title 'Guru' must be used with all the Gurus' names. Sikhs usually use further terms of respect, eg. Guru Gobind Singh Ji or Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
Guru Granth Sahib	Adi Granth	Primal collection of Sikh scriptures, compiled by Guru Arjan and given its final form by Guru Gobind Singh.
Guru Har Gobind	Guru Hargobind	Sixth Sikh Guru
Guru Har Krishan	Guru Harkrishan	Eighth Sikh Guru
Guru Nanak		The first Guru and the founder of the Sikh faith (1469-1539).
Guru Tegh Bahadur		The ninth Guru who was martyred for the principle of religious tolerance (1622-1675).
haumai		<i>Egoism</i> . The major spiritual defect.
Hola Mahala		Early spring festival celebrating martial arts and harvest.
hukam	vak	Random reading taken for guidance from the Guru Granth Sahib. God's will.
ik onkar		There is only one God. The first phrase of the Mool Mantar. It is also used as a symbol to decorate Sikh objects.
japji sahib		A morning prayer, composed by Guru Nanak, which forms the first chapter of the Guru Granth Sahib.
jivan mukt	jivan mukht	Enlightened while in the material body. A spiritually enlightened person, freed from worldly bonds.

Sikhism glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
kachera	kach	Traditional underwear resembling shorts. One of the five K's.
kangha	kanga	Comb worn in the hair. One of the five K's.
kara		Steel band worn on the right wrist. One of the five K's.
karah parshad	karah prasad	sanctified food distributed at Sikh ceremonies.
kaur		<i>princess</i> . Name given to all Sikh females by Guru Gobind Singh.
kesh	kes	Uncut hair. One of the five K's.
Khalsa		The community of the pure. The Sikh community.
khanda		Double-edged sword used in the initiation ceremony. Also used as the emblem on the Sikh flag.
kirat karna		The principle that you should earn your living honestly. Earning one's living by one's own efforts.
kirpan		Sword. One of the five K's. 'Dagger' should be avoided.
kirtan		Devotional singing of the compositions found in the Guru Granth Sahib.
kirtan sohila		A prayer said before retiring for sleep. It is also used at the cremation ceremony and when the Guru Granth Sahib is laid to rest.
kurahit		Prohibitions. Things which are banned according to the Sikh code of discipline, eg. Intoxicants.
langar	Guru ka langar	<i>Guru's kitchen</i> . The Gurdwara dining hall and the food served in it.
mela		<i>Fair</i> . Used of Sikh festivals which are not gutpurbs.
manji	manji sahib	Small platform on which the scripture is placed.
manmukh	munmukh	<i>To follow one's mind or desires</i> . Self-orientated. Attached to worldly desires, material wealth. The opposite of gurmukh.
Mool Mantar	Mul Mantar	Basic teaching. Essential teaching. The basic statement of belief at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Sikhism glossary		
preferred form	main variant	explanation
nam simran	nam simaran naam simran	Meditation on the divine name, using passages of scripture.
nishan sahib		Sikh flag flown at gurdwaras.
panj kakke		<i>The five K's</i> . The symbols of Sikhism worn by Sikhs.
palki		<i>Where the Guru resides</i> . The canopy in a gurdwara under which the Guru Granth Sahib is placed.
panj piare	panj pyare	The five beloved ones. Those first initiated into the Khalsa. Those who perform the rite today.
panth		The Sikh community.
ragi		Sikh musicians who sings compositions from the Guru Granth Sahib.
Raheguru		<i>Wonderful Lord</i> Waheguru. A Sikh name for God.
Rahit Maryada	Rehat Maryada	Sikh code of discipline.
sangat	sadhsangat	Congregation or assembly of Sikhs.
sewa	seva	Service in order to help the Sikh congregation, or the Gurdwara, but also humanity in general.
vand chhakna		Sharing one's time, talents and earnings with the less fortunate.

The palki in the gurdwara in Wellington Road, Dudley. Under the canopy of the palki the Sikh holy scriptures are placed.



General glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
agnostic		An agnostic holds the view that it is not very likely that there is a God but there is always the possibility that it may be true.
altruism		Altruism is the belief that life should be based on the highest of possible moral standards and only the purest of motives.
analogy		An analogy may be used to make an argument clearer or more vivid. Usually an analogy suggests a similarity between something known and something unknown or not very well known.
anecdotal		A reference to a single event or incidence. If an argument is based on anecdotal evidence it is usually considered weak because it relies on evidence based on only a single event or a limited number of events.
assumption		Something unexamined or taken for granted. An assumption is often the cause of flawed thinking.
atheist		A person who does not believe in God. Or to put it in another way – a person who asserts that there is no God.
benevolent		A word often used to describe God as being loving, kind and forgiving.
benevolent lie		A lie which is claimed to be the right thing to do as it will prevent a greater evil or will bring about a greater good.
consequentialism		Moral thinking that uses consequences or outcomes to decide what is right or wrong.
conscience		A sense or feeling of knowing right from wrong.
creationist		A creationist believes that God literally created the universe in six days and deny the Theory of Evolution.
ethics		The study of what is right and wrong and how humans should live.

General glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
eudaimonia	eudaemonia	<i>Well-being.</i> A Greek word which means a deep sense of happiness or contentment with life.
deism		The belief that there is a God who plays no part in what goes on in the world.
deity		A word for God often used by thinkers and scholars when discussing what God is like.
divine command theory		An ethical theory which claims that God alone decides what is right or wrong.
dualism		The belief that there is a good god (or force) and an evil god (or force) that are almost equal in power and war against each other.
evolution		The theory made famous by Charles Darwin that claims that all forms of life adapts by natural selection to the environment and so changes very slowly over time.
Golden Rule		The Golden Rule rejects retaliation but requires that a person should treat other people as they would like to be treated.
humanism		The belief that the essential questions about life and existence can be answered without recourse to religious or supernatural explanations.
lex talionis		<i>law of retaliation.</i> The principle that violence should be returned which is in proportion to the violence that has been inflicted.
monogamy		A marriage partnership between two people, a wife and a husband.
monotheism		The belief that there is only one God. Islam, Christianity and Judaism are monotheistic religions.
moral		Concerned with the judgement of right and wrong behaviour or the goodness or badness of human actions.
myth		An ancient method of vividly giving expression to profound statements about human life and the human condition often in the form of a story.
objective		The belief that judgements, particularly moral judgements, are statements about reality and not just expressions of an individual's personal preference.

General glossary

preferred form	main variant	explanation
omnipotence		Omnipotence means all-powerful, capable of doing anything. It is a word often used to describe the all-powerful nature of God.
permissiveness		The belief that all things should be permitted and not prevented on moral grounds.
psychosomatic		A physical illness that is caused or is partially caused by the mind.
sceptic		A person who doubts or disbelieves. Usually used of people who doubt religious claims.
Silver Rule		The Silver Rule requires that people should be treated as they would wish to be treated.
Situation ethics		The ethical theory which proposes that with each situation the question to ask is, 'What is the most loving thing possible in this situation?'
sophistry		Using trick or false arguments to win a debate.
subjective		The belief that judgements, particularly moral judgements, are merely an expression of an individual's personal preference, opinion or feeling.
theism		The belief that there is a God who is active and does things in the world, for example, a God who responds to prayer.
Transcendent		Beyond or above normal physical human experience. Often it is used in the sense of "a transcendent world" which is a higher world that cannot be seen or touched.
universalisation		A method of testing whether an action is morally right or wrong by asking would an action be acceptable if everyone in the same situation were to behave in the same way. If the action cannot be universalised and applied to everybody it is not morally right.
utilitarianism		The ethical theory which says that what is right or wrong is limited to whether an action increases happiness or increases suffering.
white lie		A lie that is often used to be polite or tactful. Often claimed to be morally unimportant.

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