

## E3 Developing knowledge, skills and attitudes in RE

Progress in RE involves the application of general educational skills and processes in handling subject knowledge. This, in turn, strengthens the skills and deepens understanding and knowledge. The following skills are important in RE, and are reflected in many agreed syllabus programmes and approaches. You should plan to enable pupils to make progress with these skills, as appropriate in each key stage.

<b>RE teaching is intended to develop these skills:</b>	<b>Examples of progression from 5–16: Pupils will be increasingly able to:</b>
<p><b>Investigating</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ asking relevant questions</li> <li>▪ knowing how to use different types of sources as ways of gathering information</li> <li>▪ knowing what may constitute evidence for understanding religion(s).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask increasingly deep and complex questions about religion.</li> <li>▪ Use a widening range of sources to pursue answers.</li> <li>▪ Focus on selecting and understanding relevant sources to deal with religious and spiritual questions with increasing insight and sensitivity.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate a range of responses to the questions and issues they study.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflecting</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ reflecting on religious beliefs and practices and ultimate questions</li> <li>▪ reflecting upon feelings, relationships, and experiences</li> <li>▪ thinking and speaking carefully about religious and spiritual topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe how action and atmosphere makes them feel.</li> <li>▪ Experience the use of silence and thoughtfulness in religion and in life.</li> <li>▪ Take increasing account of the meanings of experience and discern the depth of questions religion addresses.</li> <li>▪ Respond sensitively and with insight to religious and spiritual phenomena and their meanings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expressing</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ explaining concepts, rituals and practices</li> <li>▪ identifying and articulating matters of deep conviction and concern, and responding to religious issues through a variety of media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explain what words and actions might mean to believers.</li> <li>▪ Articulate their own reactions and ideas about religious questions and practices.</li> <li>▪ Clarify and analyse with growing confidence aspects of religion which they find valuable or interesting or negative.</li> <li>▪ Explain in words and other ways their own responses to matters of deep conviction.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interpreting</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ drawing meaning from, for example artefacts, works of art, poetry and symbols</li> <li>▪ interpreting religious language</li> <li>▪ suggesting meanings of religious texts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Say what an object means, or explain a symbol.</li> <li>▪ Use figures of speech or metaphors to speak creatively about religious ideas.</li> <li>▪ Understand increasingly the diverse ways in which religious and spiritual experience can be interpreted.</li> <li>▪ Clarify and express the role of interpretation in religion and life.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empathising</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ considering the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others</li> <li>▪ developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow</li> <li>▪ seeing the world through the eyes of others, and to see issues from their point of view, deepening understanding of beliefs and practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ See with sensitivity how others respond to their actions, words or behaviour.</li> <li>▪ Connect their feelings, both positive and negative, with those of others, including those in religious stories and contexts.</li> <li>▪ Imagine with growing awareness how they would feel in a different situation from their own.</li> <li>▪ Identify thoughtfully with other people from a range of communities and stances for life.</li> </ul>

<b>RE teaching is intended to develop these skills:</b>	<b>Examples of progression from 5–16: Pupils will be increasingly able to:</b>
<p><b>Applying</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ using RE learning in new situations</li> <li>▪ making the association between religions and individual community, national and international life</li> <li>▪ identifying key religious values and their connections with secular values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognise religious materials and take note of their details and style.</li> <li>▪ See links and simple connections between aspects of religions.</li> <li>▪ Make increasingly subtle and complex links between religious material and their own ideas.</li> <li>▪ Apply learning from one religious context to new contexts with growing awareness and clarity.</li> <li>▪ Synthesise their learning from different religious sources and their own ideas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discerning</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ developing insight into personal experience and religion</li> <li>▪ exploring the positive and negative aspects of religious and secular beliefs and ways of life</li> <li>▪ relating learning to life</li> <li>▪ making thoughtful judgements about the personal value of religious beliefs and practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience the awe and wonder of the natural world and of human relations.</li> <li>▪ Be willing to look beyond the surface at underlying ideas and questions.</li> <li>▪ Weigh up the value religious believers find in their faith with insight, relating it to their own experience.</li> <li>▪ Discern with clarity, respect and thoughtfulness the impact (positive and negative) of religious and secular ways of living.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Analysing</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact</li> <li>▪ distinguishing between the features of different religions</li> <li>▪ recognising similarities and distinctiveness of religious ways of life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ See what kinds of reasons are given to explain religious aspects of life.</li> <li>▪ Join in discussion about issues arising from the study of religion.</li> <li>▪ Use reasons, facts, opinions, examples and experience to justify or question a view of a religious issue.</li> <li>▪ Analyse the religious views encountered with fairness, balance, empathy and critical rigour.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Synthesising</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ linking significant features of religion together in a coherent pattern</li> <li>▪ connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole</li> <li>▪ making links between religion and human experience, including the pupil's own experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notice similarities between stories and practices from religions.</li> <li>▪ Use general words to describe a range of religious practice and teaching.</li> <li>▪ Make links between different aspects of one religion, or similar and contrasting aspects of two or more religions.</li> <li>▪ Explain clearly the relationships, similarities and differences between a range of religious arguments, ideas, views and teachings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluating</b> – in RE this includes abilities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ debating issues of religious significance with reference to experience, evidence and argument</li> <li>▪ weighing the respective claims of self-interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience</li> <li>▪ drawing conclusions which are balanced, and related to evidence, dialogue and experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Talk about what makes people choose religious ways of life.</li> <li>▪ Describe how religious people show the importance of symbols, key figures, texts or stories.</li> <li>▪ Weigh up with fairness and balance the value they see in a range of religious practices.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate skilfully some religious responses to moral issues, and their own responses.</li> </ul>

### Developing attitudes

Attitudes such as respect, care and concern should be promoted through all areas of school life. There are some attitudes that are fundamental to Religious Education in that they are prerequisites for entering fully into the study of religions, and learning from that experience. The following attitudes are to be fostered through the agreed syllabus:

#### a) Curiosity and wonder – in RE this includes:

- developing imagination and curiosity
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live
- developing their interest in and capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose
- exploring the nature of religious practices and teachings
- being willing to look carefully at ‘the other’ and be open to learning from it
- following mysterious and profound lines of thinking through, to see where they lead.

#### b) Commitment – in RE this includes:

- understanding the importance of commitment to a set of values by which to live one's life
- willingness to develop a positive approach to life
- the ability to learn, while living with certainty and uncertainty.

#### c) Fairness – in RE this includes:

- listening to the views of others without prejudging one's response
- careful consideration of other views
- willingness to consider evidence, experience and argument
- readiness to look beyond surface impressions
- developing the courage to pursue fairness.

#### d) Respect – in RE this includes:

- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others
- developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when others' views are different from their own
- being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- appreciating that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society
- being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias
- recognising the rights of others to hold their own views
- avoidance of ridicule
- discerning between what is worthy of respect and what is not
- appreciation that religious convictions are often deeply felt.

#### e) Self-understanding – in RE this includes:

- feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas and a mature sense of self worth
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth
- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people
- developing the capacity to discern the personal relevance of religious questions
- deepening awareness of the role of belief and tradition in identity and culture.

**f) Open mindedness** – in RE this includes:

- being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions
- developing the confidence in one's own identity to appreciate the identity of others
- willingness to seek new truth through learning
- openness to points of view different from one's own.

**g) Critical mindedness** – in RE this includes:

- a willingness to examine ideas, questions and disputes about religious and spiritual questions
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith
- the development of attitudes that distinguish between such things as superstition or prejudice and such things as conviction, personal commitment and faith
- the ability to argue respectfully, reasonably and evidentially about religious and spiritual questions.

**h) Enquiry** - in RE this includes:

- a desire to seek after the truth
- developing a personal interest in ultimate or metaphysical questions
- an ability to live with ambiguities and paradox
- the desire to search for the meaning of life
- being prepared to reconsider existing views critically
- being prepared to acknowledge bias and prejudice in oneself
- willingness to value insight and imagination as ways of perceiving reality.

## E4 Models of curriculum provision

This syllabus allows flexibility in RE provision and it is for schools to decide how RE should be delivered, ensuring that there is continuity and progression in learning across key stages, and that annual reports of pupils' progress can be provided.

Primary schools will have different approaches to meet different requirements. They may use the following approaches or a combination of them:

- teaching RE as a separate subject either timetabled on a weekly basis or delivered in blocks of time at different points in the school year (ensuring the requirements of the agreed syllabus are met)
- teaching RE within whole-school topics which bring together a number of subject areas (note: if this approach is followed it is essential that RE is planned to meet the objectives of the agreed syllabus)
- teaching some religions separately, or systematically – there are several units that enable this
- teaching RE units thematically i.e. teaching units which draw on more than one religion to explore a religious concept such as sacred books, worship or life as journey – there are units that take a thematic approach
- organising a rolling programme of study units, in order to meet the needs of schools with mixed-age classes, with units planned so that the pitch and expectations for each unit are matched to the different ages and abilities within the class. (For example a mixed year 3 and 4 class may be taught a sequence of RE units over a two year cycle, year A and year B, ensuring learning outcomes and activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' different ages and abilities)
- in small schools, the emerging, expected and exceeding learning outcomes in each unit mean that it is also possible to use a spiral curriculum in which the same RE unit is taught across all classes, ages and abilities at a given time, planned so that pitch and expectations are matched to different ages and abilities across the key stage
- some schools use an 'RE Week' or an 'RE Day' to focus learning, then follow up the 'big experience' with linked lessons over several weeks. Such 'big events' planning is demanding of teachers, but can help the whole school to focus and develop the subject. A day is about 5 hours, so is not, of course, a substitute for a term's work. The key to success is clarity about the RE learning that is planned.

### Planning to ensure continuity and progression

Continuity can be achieved if planning starts from the agreed syllabus and careful attention is paid to what has been taught before and what is likely to follow.

Progression is the development of knowledge and understanding, skills, concepts and attitudes in a key stage and in relation to previous and subsequent key stages. It is achieved through building on earlier learning. It is not just about accumulation of knowledge but concerns a developing ability to deepen understanding by making use of reflective, interpretative and evaluative skills. Pupils should increasingly be challenged to discover the underlying messages of the teaching behind religious traditions, stories, artefacts and ceremonies.

Progression is characterised by the provision of opportunities for pupils to:

- extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and beliefs
- extend their ability to use religious vocabulary and interpret religious symbolism in a variety of forms
- deepen their reflection on questions of meaning, offering their own thoughtful and informed insights into religious and non-religious views of life's meaning and purpose
- explore fundamental questions of beliefs and values in relation to a range of contemporary issues.

Continuity and progression can be achieved when pupils have increasingly challenging opportunities to:

- appreciate the importance of religion in the lives of many people
- grow in understanding of the influence of belief on behaviour, values and attitudes
- consider their own beliefs, values and attitudes
- consider religious perspectives on contemporary social and moral issues.