

About Religious Education in the curriculum

*Pupils should not just learn
about religion
but also about themselves
from religion.*

Why is Religious Education important?

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life; beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality; issues of right and wrong; and what it means to be human. It encourages pupils to think and question.

It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world-views, that offer responses to questions such as these.

It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices, and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

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

Religious Education encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community.

Religious Education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and life long learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

What contribution can Religious Education make to the school curriculum?

1 How can Religious Education support the values of the curriculum?

Religious Education actively promotes the values of truth, justice, respect for all and care of the environment. It places specific emphasis on:

- pupils valuing themselves and others;
- the role of family and the community in religious belief and activity;
- the celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences;
- sustainable development of the earth.

Religious Education also recognises the changing nature of society, including changes in religious practice and expression, and the influence of religion in the local, national and global community.

2 How can Religious Education support the aims of the curriculum?

Aim 1: The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.

Religious Education should be a stimulating, interesting and enjoyable subject. The knowledge, skills and understanding outlined in this Agreed Syllabus are designed to promote the best possible progress and attainment for all pupils. Religious Education develops independent and interdependent learning. It makes an important contribution to pupils' skills in literacy and ICT. Religious Education promotes an enquiring approach in which pupils carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religion. It also enhances the capacity to think coherently and consistently. This enables pupils to evaluate thoughtfully their own and others' views in a reasoned and informed manner.

Aim 2: The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

Religious Education has a significant role in the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At the heart of this Agreed Syllabus is a focus on ultimate questions and ethical issues. This focus enables pupils to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures and how these impact on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.

Religious Education seeks to develop pupils' awareness of themselves and others. This helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of the significance of religions and beliefs in the world today and learn about the ways different faith communities relate to each other.

This Syllabus aims to promote religious understanding, discernment and respect and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping. Religious Education is committed to exploring the significance of the environment, both locally and globally, and the roles of human beings and other species within it.

A central concern of Religious Education is the promotion of each pupil's self-worth. A sense of self-worth helps pupils to reflect on their uniqueness as human beings, share their feelings and emotions with others and appreciate the importance of forming and maintaining positive relationships.

What is the structure of this agreed syllabus?

The legal position

Religious Education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools, including those in Reception classes and in the sixth form, except to those withdrawn by their parents. This requirement does not apply to nursery classes in maintained schools.

Religious Education is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools. In all maintained schools, other than voluntary aided schools with a religious character, it must be taught according to a locally Agreed Syllabus.

The programme of study in this Agreed Syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught. The attainment levels set out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages. In line with the Education Act 1996, this Agreed Syllabus reflects 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.

*Adequate curriculum time must be provided for Religious Education.
This will not usually be less than 5%.*

The Foundation Stage (ages 3-5)

Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage (QCA, 2000) sets out expectations of what pupils should learn to meet the Early Learning Goals. This Agreed Syllabus describes how Religious Education can contribute to the Early Learning Goals and provides examples of activities related to Religious Education.

Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (ages 5-14)

This Agreed Syllabus follows the same format as the National Curriculum programmes of study with sections on knowledge, skills and understanding and breadth of study.

Ages 14-19

This Agreed Syllabus sets out an entitlement for all students to study Religious Education and to have their learning accredited.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

The knowledge, skills and understanding identify the key aspects of learning in Religious Education. These are described as Learning about religion (AT1) and Learning from religion (AT2).

Breadth of study

The knowledge, skills and understanding are developed through the breadth of study which has three elements: 1 religions and beliefs; 2 themes; 3 experiences and opportunities.

I Religions and beliefs

To make sure that the legal requirements for Religious Education are met and the Religious Education curriculum is broad and balanced:

- Christianity should be studied throughout each key stage.
- The other principal religions represented in Great Britain should be studied across the key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils should have an adequate understanding of at least three religions and have knowledge of aspects of others. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils should have encountered all five of these principal religions in sufficient depth.

Schools should liaise across the key stages to allow the full range of religions to be studied over the key stages.

For the purposes of this syllabus the five other principal religions represented in Great Britain are divided into:

Group A - Judaism and Islam

Group B - Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism

Foundation Stage

pupils should experience Religious Education related activities from a range of world religions to contribute to the Early Learning Goals.

In Key Stage 1

- Christianity;
- one religion from either Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism;
- knowledge of aspects of other religions.

In Key Stage 2

- Christianity;
- the same other religion as studied in Key Stage 1;
- another religion from the other group;
- knowledge of aspects of other religions.

In Key Stage 3

- Christianity;
- one religion from Group A (Judaism or Islam);
- one religion from Group B (Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism);
- knowledge of aspects of other religions.

In Key Stage 4

Either:

- Christianity;
- one religion from Group A (Judaism or Islam);
- one religion from Group B (Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism);
- knowledge of aspects of other religions.

Or:

- a Religious Education or Religious Studies course leading to a qualification under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Council Act 2000.

Post 16

Either:

- a Religious Education or Religious Studies course leading to a qualification under Section 96 that represents progression from 14-16;

Or:

- the material from the Post 16 section of this syllabus.

It is essential that Religious Education enables pupils to share their own beliefs, viewpoints and ideas without embarrassment or ridicule. Many pupils come from religious backgrounds but others have no attachment to religious beliefs and practices. To ensure that all pupils' voices are heard and the Religious Education curriculum is broad and balanced, it is recommended that there are opportunities for pupils to study:

- other religious traditions such as the Bahá'í faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism;
- secular philosophies such as humanism.

Pupils should also study how religions relate to each other, recognising both similarities and differences within and between religions. They should be encouraged to reflect on the significance of interfaith dialogue and the important contribution religion can make to community cohesion and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.

2 Themes

The themes provide the context for 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'. They may be taught separately, in combination with other themes, or across several religions and beliefs. However the themes are combined, the knowledge, skills and understanding should be covered with sufficient breadth and depth.

3 Experiences and opportunities

Pupils should be provided with a range of experiences and opportunities that can enrich and broaden their learning in Religious Education. Teachers should use a variety of methodologies, as described in the suggested learning experiences throughout this syllabus.

What are the two Attainment Targets for Religious Education?

The Attainment Targets set out the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have. The Attainment Targets consist 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. Apart from their summative use, these level descriptions can be used in assessment for learning.

The key indicators of attainment in Religious Education are contained in the two Attainment Targets:

Learning about Religion - AT1

Includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion. It focuses on beliefs, teachings and sources, practices and ways of life and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary.

It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues. Learning about religion covers pupils' knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion.

Learning from Religion - AT2

Is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on, and response to, their own and others' experiences in light of their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion. Pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments.

Assessing Attainment at the end of a key stage

The two Attainment Targets are closely related and neither should be taught in isolation. Therefore, assessment needs to take place in relation to both Attainment Targets.

The level descriptions provide the basis on which to make judgements about pupils' performance at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. In the foundation stage, children's attainment is assessed in relation to the Early Learning Goals. At Key Stage 4, national qualifications are often the means of assessing attainment; where this does not apply the level descriptions may be used.

Range of levels within which the majority of pupils are expected to work		Expected attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of the key stage	
Key Stage 1	1-3	At age 7	2
Key Stage 2	2-5	At age 11	4
Key Stage 3	3-7	At age 14	5/6
Key Stage 4	5-EP	At age 16	7/8

In deciding on a pupil's level of attainment at the end of a key stage, teachers should judge 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 Cumbrian schools may report to parents on pupils' progress in Religious Education in terms of these levels of attainment.

It is important to note that not all aspects of Religious Education can be assessed. For example, pupils may express personal views and ideas that, although integral to teaching and learning, would not be appropriate for formal assessment.

Attainment Targets for Religious Education - Level Descriptions

Level 1

AT1

- Pupils use some religious words and phrases to recognise and name features of religious life and practice.
- They can recall religious stories and recognise symbols and other verbal and visual forms of religious expression.

AT2

- Pupils talk about their own experiences and feelings, what they find interesting or puzzling and what is of value and concern to themselves and to others.

Level 2

AT1

- Pupils use religious words and phrases to identify some features of religion and its importance for some people.
- They begin to show awareness of similarities in religions.
- Pupils retell religious stories and suggest meanings for religious actions and symbols.
- They identify how religion is expressed in different ways.

AT2

- Pupils ask, and respond sensitively to, questions about their own and others' experiences and feelings.
- They recognise that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer.
- In relation to matters of right and wrong, they recognise their own values and those of others.

Level 3

AT1

- Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe some key features of religions, recognising similarities and differences.
- They make links between beliefs and sources, including religious stories and sacred texts. They begin to identify the impact religion has on believers' lives.
- They describe some forms of religious expression.

AT2

- Pupils identify what influences them, making links between aspects of their own and others' experiences.
- They ask important questions about religion and beliefs, making links between their own and others' responses.
- They make links between values and commitments, and their own attitudes and behaviour.

Level 4

AT1

- Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, practices, beliefs, ideas, feelings and experiences.
- They make links between them, and describe some similarities and differences both within and between religions.
- They describe the impact of religion on people's lives.
- They suggest meanings for a range of forms of religious expression.

AT2

- Pupils raise, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments.
- They apply their ideas to their own and other people's lives.
- They describe what inspires and influences themselves and others.

Level 5

AT1

- Pupils use an increasingly wide religious vocabulary to explain the impact of beliefs on individuals and communities.
- They describe why people belong to religions.
- They understand that similarities and differences illustrate distinctive beliefs within and between religions and suggest possible reasons for this.
- They explain how religious sources are used to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues, recognising diversity in forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression, within and between religions.

AT2

- Pupils ask, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments, relating them to their own and others' lives.
- They explain what inspires and influences them, expressing their own and others' views on the challenges of belonging to a religion.

Level 6

AT1

- Pupils use religious and philosophical vocabulary to give informed accounts of religions and beliefs, explaining the reasons for diversity within and between them.
- They explain why the impact of religions and beliefs on individuals, communities and societies varies.
- They interpret sources and arguments, explaining the reasons that are used in different ways by different traditions to provide answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues.
- They interpret the significance of different forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

Level 7

AT1

- Pupils use a wide religious and philosophical vocabulary to show a coherent understanding of a range of religions and beliefs.
- They analyse issues, values and questions of meaning and truth.
- They account for the influence of history and culture on aspects of religious life and practice.
- They explain why the consequences of belonging to a faith are not the same for all people within the same religion or tradition.
- They use some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied, including the use of a variety of sources, evidence and forms of expression.

Level 8

AT1

- Pupils use a comprehensive religious and philosophical vocabulary to analyse a range of religions and beliefs.
- They contextualise interpretations of religion with reference to historical, cultural, social and philosophical ideas.
- They critically evaluate the impact of religions and beliefs on differing communities and societies.
- They analyse differing interpretations of religious, spiritual and moral sources, using some of the principal methods by which religion, spirituality and ethics are studied.
- They interpret and evaluate varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

Exceptional performance

AT1

- Pupils use a complex religious, moral and philosophical vocabulary to provide a consistent and detailed analysis of religions and beliefs.
- They evaluate in depth the importance of religious diversity in a pluralistic society.
- They clearly recognise the extent to which the impact of religion and beliefs on different communities and societies has changed over time.
- They provide a detailed analysis of how religious, spiritual and moral sources are interpreted in different ways, evaluating the principal methods by which religion and spirituality are studied.
- They synthesise effectively their accounts of the varied forms of religious, spiritual and moral expression.

AT2

- Pupils use reasoning and examples to express insights into the relationship between beliefs, teachings and world issues.
- They express insights into their own and others' views on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth.
- They consider the challenges of belonging to a religion in the contemporary world, focusing on values and commitments.

AT2

- Pupils articulate personal and critical responses to questions of meaning, purpose and truth and ethical issues.
- They evaluate the significance of religious and other views for understanding questions of human relationships, belonging, identity, society, values and commitments, using appropriate evidence and examples.

AT2

- Pupils coherently analyse a wide range of viewpoints on questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments.
- They synthesise a range of evidence, arguments, reflections and examples, fully justifying their own views and ideas and providing a detailed evaluation of the perspectives of others.

AT2

- Pupils analyse in depth a wide range of perspectives on questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments.
- They give independent, well informed and highly reasoned insights into their own and others' perspectives on religious and spiritual issues, providing well-substantiated and balanced conclusions.

What concepts are to be understood in Religious Education?

This syllabus has 5 concepts which are to be explored equally. Each concept:

- conveys a fundamental idea in religion;
- is capable of exploration at different depths and levels;
- is distinctive and relates to the other concepts, e.g. in exploring worship, the pupils' understanding of belief, deity, authority and commitment can be developed.

Belief

Religious beliefs are more than the acceptance of propositions expressed in statements of creed and moral codes. They are a central feature in the lives of believers, affecting daily life, values, attitudes and behaviour. Religious systems include beliefs in and about, God, forgiveness, life after death, creation, good and evil. Discussion on 'belief' creates opportunities to consider associated words such as trust, values and commitment. Opportunities should also be provided for the children to reflect upon their own beliefs.

Worship

Worship is a means of expressing beliefs, faith and commitment. It is a form of communication with a deity and demonstrates, for example, awe, wonder, reverence and devotion. It embodies aspects of discipline and duty; corporate identity and personal response. Worship can be explored through the study of celebration, festival, ceremony and prayer; ritual, symbolism, language and places of worship.

Deity

This is the concept of a power or being which can be experienced but which cannot be fully comprehended. It is beyond the scope of nature or science but can be described in personal terms and evokes a response in worship, faith and commitment. Deity can be explored through language such as 'Creator' and 'Father'; through imagery, symbolism, art and through exploring a theistic view of life.

Authority

Religions are full of expressions of authority; e.g. sacred literature, the teaching and example of religious leaders and moral codes which guide daily life and behaviour. The study of this concept raises challenging questions about the value and limits of authority and freedom.

Commitment

Belief often influences behaviour. It is expressed in attitude, action, personal conviction and way of life. A working definition of commitment might be 'acting on principle', that is, 'I act in this way because I believe'. A range of important ideas are included in commitment - caring, duty, obligation, holding a set of moral values, dedication, discipleship, discipline, perseverance, protest, resistance to pressure and vocation.

Commitment can be explored through exemplary figures, past and present, religious and secular; through actions such as pilgrimage; through charitable organisations; through special clothing and food laws. Commitment may also be seen in attitudes such as taking a positive approach to life and continuing to learn while living with personal convictions. There is a 'dark' side to commitment which may be expressed in fanaticism, manipulating others, terrorism and injustice.

What skills are to be developed in Religious Education?

Progress in RE is dependent on the development of skills which will enable pupils to understand the concepts. Throughout the Key Stages pupils should increasingly have opportunities to develop such a range of skills. The skills should be reflected in the Attainment Targets and learning experiences. Skills which are central to RE are:

Investigation

- Asking relevant questions.
- Knowing how to use different types of sources as a way of gathering information.
- Knowing what may constitute evidence for understanding religion(s).
- The ability to ascertain facts.

Interpretation

- The ability to draw meaning from artefacts, art, poetry and symbolism.
- The ability to interpret religious language.
- The ability to suggest meanings of religious texts.

Evaluation

- The ability to debate issues of religious significance, with reference to evidence, factual information and argument.
- Weighing the respective claims of self interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience.

Analysis

- Exercising critical and appreciative judgement to distinguish between belief, prejudice, superstition, opinion and fact.
- Distinguishing between the features of different religions.

Synthesis

- Linking significant features of religion together in a coherent pattern.
- Connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole.

Application

- Making the association between religions and individual, community, national and international life.
- Identifying key religious values and their interplay with secular values.

Reflection

- The ability to think reflectively about feelings, relationships, experience, ultimate questions, beliefs and practices.

Empathy

- The ability to consider the thoughts, feelings, experiences, beliefs, attitudes and values of others.
- Developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow.
- The ability to understand the world through the eyes of others, and to see issues from their point of view.

Expression

- The ability to explain concepts, rituals and practices.
- The ability to communicate the significance of religious symbols, technical terms and religious imagery.
- The ability to pursue a line of enquiry or argument.
- The ability to identify and give expression to matters of deep concern and to respond to religious and moral issues through a variety of media.
- The ability to give an informed opinion and express a personal viewpoint.

What attitudes are to be developed in Religious Education?

While the knowledge, skills and understanding are central to this Agreed Syllabus, it is also vital that Religious Education encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others.

The following four attitudes are essential for good learning in Religious Education and should be developed at each stage or phase of Religious Education:

- self-awareness;
- respect for all;
- open-mindedness;
- appreciation and wonder.

Self-awareness in Religious Education includes pupils:

- 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;
- 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.

Respect for all in Religious Education includes pupils:

- 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;
- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others.

Open-mindedness in Religious Education includes pupils:

- 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;
- being willing to go beyond surface impressions;
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith.

Appreciation and wonder in Religious Education includes pupils:

- developing their imagination and curiosity;
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery;
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live;
- developing their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose.

What contribution does Religious Education make to learning across the curriculum?

How is spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promoted through RE?

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

- discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, beliefs about God and values such as justice, honesty and truth;
- learning about and reflecting on important concepts, experiences and beliefs that are at the heart of religious and other traditions and practices;
- considering how beliefs and concepts in religion may be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and related to the human and natural sciences, thereby contributing to personal and communal identity;
- considering how religions and other world views perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world, and with God;
- valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging;
- developing their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues.

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

- enhancing the values identified within the National Curriculum, particularly valuing diversity and engaging in issues of truth, justice and trust;
- exploring the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, sacred texts and guidance from religious leaders;
- considering what is of ultimate value to pupils and believers through studying key beliefs and teachings from religion and philosophy about values and ethical codes of practice;
- studying a range of ethical issues, including those that focus on justice, to promote racial and religious respect and personal integrity;
- considering rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

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

- considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns;
- investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions as well as the common ground between religions;
- articulating pupils' own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues.

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

- encountering people, literature, the creative and expressive arts and resources from differing cultures;
- considering the relationship between religion and cultures and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices;
- promoting racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.

How is citizenship promoted through Religious Education?

Religious Education plays a significant part in promoting *citizenship* through:

- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding;
- enabling pupils to think about topical spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly;
- exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally;
- enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events and how these opinions may affect lives.

How is personal, social and health education promoted through Religious Education?

Religious Education plays a significant part in promoting *personal, social and health education* through pupils:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by learning about what is fair, unfair; right, wrong and being encouraged to share their opinions;
- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle by learning about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality, learning about the purpose and value of religious beliefs and sensitivities in relation to sex education and enabling pupils to consider and express their own views;
- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people by learning about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings, considering issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people whose beliefs, views and lifestyles are different from their own.

How are key skills promoted through Religious Education?

Religious Education provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- **communication** through:
 - developing a broad and accurate religious vocabulary;
 - reading and responding to a range of written and spoken language (including sacred texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy and worship);
 - communicating ideas using the creative and expressive arts;
 - talking and writing with understanding and insight about religious and other beliefs and values, reflecting critically on ultimate questions of life, using reasoned arguments.
- **application of number** through calendrical reckoning, collecting, recording, presenting and interpreting data involving graphs, charts and statistical analysis;
- **information technology** through using CD-ROMs and the internet selectively, researching information about religions and beliefs, teaching and practices, using email to communicate and analyse information with people of differing beliefs and cultures, using spreadsheets and databases to handle and present relevant data;
- **working with others** through sharing ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices, collaborating with each other and developing respect and sensitivity;
- **improving own learning and performance** through setting targets as part of RE development, reviewing their achievements and identifying ways to improve their work;
- **problem solving** through recognising key issues to do with religious belief, practice and expression, interpreting and explaining findings and making personal decisions on religious issues (for example, considering their own and religious ideas on good and evil), ethical dilemmas and priorities in life.

How are other aspects of the curriculum promoted through Religious education?

Religious Education provides opportunities to promote:

- **thinking skills** through helping pupils to research, select, interpret and analyse information from religious traditions, reflect and question their own views and ideas and those of others and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways;
- **financial capability** through considering the responsible use of money, the importance of giving and the ethics of wealth, debt, poverty, gambling, business and investment;
- **creativity and culture** through considering the scope of human nature, sources of inspiration and discovery, connections between beliefs, values and forms of artistic expression, appreciating the value of cultural distinctiveness and reflecting on beauty, goodness and truth in creative and expressive arts;
- **education for racial equality and community cohesion** through studying the damaging effects of xenophobia and racial stereotyping, the impact of conflict in religion and the promotion of respect, understanding and cooperation through dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs;
- **effective contributions to scientific, medical and health issues** through exploring philosophical and ethical questions of the origin, purpose and destiny of the cosmos and life within it, exploring the nature of humanity and human interaction with the world, exploring developments in genetics and medicine and their application and use and exploring concepts of health and well-being and their promotion;
- **links to employment, vocations and work-related learning** through a focus on individual sense of purpose and aspiration in life, and through considering the appropriateness and relevance of RE to a wide range of employment opportunities and the development of spiritual and ethical issues linked to the world of work;
- **education for sustainable development** through helping pupils consider the origins and value of life, the importance of looking after the environment and studying the ways in which religious beliefs and teachings have influenced attitudes to the environment and other species.

How is inclusion promoted in Religious Education?

Religious Education can make a significant contribution to inclusion, particularly in its focus on promoting respect for all. This Agreed Syllabus contains many references to the role of RE in challenging stereotypical views and appreciating, positively, differences in others.

Effective inclusion involves teaching a lively, stimulating Religious Education curriculum that:

- builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences pupils bring to Religious Education;
- meets all pupils' learning needs including those with learning difficulties, gifted and talented, boys and girls, pupils with EAL, pupils from all religious communities and from a wide range of ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.

To overcome any potential barriers to learning in RE, some pupils may require:

- support to access text, such as through prepared tapes, particularly when working with significant quantities of written materials or at speed;
- help to communicate their ideas through methods other than extended writing, where this is a requirement. For example, pupils may demonstrate their understanding through speech or the use of ICT;
- a non-visual way of accessing sources of information when undertaking research in aspects of Religious Education, for example using audio materials.

How is the use of language promoted in Religious Education?

RE can make an important contribution to pupils' use of language by enabling them to:

- acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary;
- communicate their ideas with depth and precision;
- listen to the views and ideas of others, including people from religious traditions;
- be enthused about the power and beauty of language, recognising its limitations;
- develop their speaking and listening skills when considering religions, beliefs and ideas and articulating their responses;
- read, particularly from sacred texts;
- write in different styles, such as poetry, diaries, extended writing and the synthesis of differing views, beliefs and ideas;
- evaluate clearly and rationally, using a range of reasoned, balanced arguments.

How is the use of information and communication technology promoted in RE?

RE can make an important contribution to pupils' use of ICT by enabling pupils to:

- make appropriate use of internet or CD-ROM sources to investigate, analyse and evaluate different aspects of religious beliefs and practices, ultimate questions and ethical issues;
- use email or videoconferencing to communicate and collaborate with individuals in different locations, enabling associations to be made between religions and individual, national and international life;
- use multimedia and presentation software to communicate a personal response, the essence of an argument or a stimulus for discussion;
- use writing-support and concept-mapping software to organise thoughts and communicate knowledge and understanding of the diversity of belief and practice within and between religious traditions;
- use equipment such as digital cameras and video to bring authentic images into class to support discussion and reflection, and to enhance understanding of the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the lives of local individuals and faith communities.