



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

NATIONAL EXEMPLAR FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Guidance for Local Education
Authorities and Agreed Syllabus
Conferences in Wales**

Title of document

National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education:
Guidance for Local Education Authorities and Agreed Syllabus Conferences
in Wales

Audience

Headteachers and governing bodies of maintained schools in Wales; local education authorities; SACREs; church diocesan authorities; national bodies in Wales with an interest in education.

Overview

This document sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's proposals for a National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education.

Action required

Responses to this consultation document must be received by 30 March 2007. Responses can be sent to the address shown below, using the freepost envelope provided, or submitted electronically to rhodri.bowen@btconnect.com. Alternatively, online questionnaires are available at www.wales.gov.uk/consultations

Further information

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Additional copies

Can be obtained from:

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Or by visiting the Welsh Assembly Government's website
www.wales.gov.uk/consultations

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Background

Every local education authority (LEA) must:

- adopt a locally agreed syllabus for religious education (RE)
- institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus within five years of its adoption or the last review (whichever is later) and, subsequently, every five years after the completion of each further review.

These requirements and the relevant procedures and processes to be followed are set out in the Education Act 1996 and the Education Standards and Framework Act 1998. LEAs will need to refer to the relevant legislative provisions as they review their locally agreed syllabuses.

The purpose of the guidance

In 2001 ACCAC provided non-statutory guidance to support LEAs when reviewing their locally agreed syllabuses. This document – *The Review of Religious Education Syllabuses: Guidance for Local Education Authorities and Agreed Syllabus Conferences in Wales* – provided exemplar national level descriptions, recommended that LEAs should consider adopting the common format used for the programmes of study of the national curriculum Orders and provided a national exemplar framework for religious education consisting of exemplar Programmes of Study.

The current advice builds on the previous guidance document, which was positively received by SACREs and LEAs, and offers a revised National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education. The revised National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education offers an opportunity to provide a coherent assessment framework for the whole of Wales and improve standards of religious education nationally. To this end LEAs and SACREs in Wales have delayed their five yearly review in order to consider the adoption/adaption of this revised framework from the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS). If approved it may be customised to relate to an LEA's locally determined agreed syllabus.

The development of the document

In developing this revised National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education, the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) applied the same timescales and procedures as those implemented by the national curriculum review. The guidance has been developed by practising teachers, an adviser and a representative from Estyn. This draft is being sent for consultation to LEAs, SACREs, schools and others with religious interests across Wales.

Religious education in the Foundation Phase

In drawing up this guidance due consideration has been given to the statutory requirement to provide religious education for 5- to 7-year-olds. Our advice on pages 13–17 is equivalent to and replaces the old exemplar Programme of Study for Key Stage 1 provided by ACCAC in 2001. Advice has also been provided for children who are 3 and 4 years old (see page 15).

During the development of this guidance, account has been taken specifically of the area of learning 'Knowledge and understanding of the world' as presented in the consultation version of the *Framework for Children's Learning in the Foundation Phase*.

It is recommended that LEAs and agreed syllabus conferences consider the advice given in this document in reviewing their locally agreed syllabuses.

Commentary on the proposals: key changes

Revised National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education – Changes from 2001

- The RE framework has been revised to:
 - focus on aspects of the subject that will motivate and engage all learners
 - make RE more relevant to the twenty-first century
 - place a stronger emphasis on skills
 - provide guidance for RE in the Foundation Phase
 - extend the framework to include Key Stage 4 and Post-16
 - provide greater opportunities for spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development to take place.
- For consistency and ease of planning the National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education has been revised to follow the structure and content of the revised national curriculum Orders.
- An introductory summary has been developed for each of the key stages/phases of education, as with the national curriculum Orders.
- There is greater emphasis on engaging with fundamental questions in the level descriptions and the programmes of study.
- Greater emphasis has been given to the skills needed for the study of RE and their significance has been strengthened through their direct connection to the level descriptions and with the three core elements (Engaging with fundamental questions; Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s); and Expressing personal responses) which underpin all study.
- The skills identified link directly with the non-statutory Skills Framework 3–19.
- The range (the world, human experience and search for meaning) as specified in the programmes of study provides a more contemporary perspective on the study of RE.
- Opportunities have been taken to make fuller reference to such cross-cutting themes as:
 - moral and spiritual development
 - health and emotional well-being
 - equal opportunities
 - active citizenship
 - sustainable development and global citizenship
 - preparing for lifelong learning.

Statutory requirements

The section below summarises the statutory requirements that apply to locally agreed syllabuses. In reviewing their locally agreed syllabus, LEAs and agreed syllabus conferences should refer directly to the appropriate legislation and should also seek their own legal advice.

Religious education, along with other subjects on the curriculum, should promote:

‘the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.’
(Section 1, 1988 Education Reform Act)

Spiritual, moral and cultural development, in particular, are essential aspects of religious education and should be clearly identifiable within locally agreed syllabuses. In this National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education:

the spiritual focuses on:

- the quest for meaning, which goes beyond the physical and material aspects of life, and explores responses to God/ultimate reality and truth (*the world*)
- the essence of what it means to be human, which explores shared values, identity, personal worth, creativity, imagination, love, faithfulness and goodness (*human experience*)
- the growth of an ‘inner life’, which focuses on the development of intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness, emotion, reflection, intuition and beliefs (*search for meaning*)

the moral focuses on:

- the exploration of shared values and attitudes, which highlights religious/cultural origins and contemporary social/political activities that influence and challenge our understanding (*the world*)
- the ability of human beings to make moral choices for good or evil, which focuses on understanding moral codes, relationships, responsibility, tolerance for diversity, temptation, the power of self-sacrifice and love (*human experience*)
- a personal response to moral issues, which focuses on the development of personal integrity, conscience, challenging personal/social norms and ‘learning what is worthy of respect and what is not’ (Hans Kung) (*search for meaning*)

the cultural focuses on:

- the ways in which culture/religion has influenced world history and human experience in both positive and negative ways, investigating the difference between official and personal standpoints (*the world*)
- the need for human beings to have a sense of cultural identity, belonging and purpose, which in Wales has been evident by the way in which religion and culture have been interwoven (*human experience*)
- pupils’ personal response to multicultural/multi-faith Wales, Europe and the world (*search for meaning*)

Statutory requirements

the mental focuses on:

- developing pupils' intellectual, intuitive, symbolic and critical qualities, which are clearly identified within the Skills section of the framework

the physical focuses on:

- the active, ritual, responsive and creative development of pupils, which is similarly promoted throughout.

'Every locally agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.'

(1998 School Standards and Framework Act, Schedule 19, Section 375 (3))

Christianity should be studied at each key stage and the other principal religions should be those represented in Great Britain.

The local education authority and agreed syllabus conference should decide whether it is appropriate to specify which of the other principal religions and how many religions should be studied at each key stage.

'No agreed syllabus shall provide for religious education to be given to pupils at a school by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of a particular religious denomination (but this is not to be taken as prohibiting provision in such a syllabus for the study of such catechisms or formularies).'

(Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 69 (2) and Schedule 19: paragraph 2(5))

A locally agreed syllabus must be non-denominational, but teaching about a particular catechism or formulary is not prohibited. Teachers may identify the differences in beliefs, teachings and practices of the religious traditions studied, but must avoid promoting denominational views.

'1. The curriculum for every maintained school in Wales shall comprise a basic curriculum which includes:
(a) provision for religious education for all registered pupils at school (in accordance with such of the provision of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (c.31) as apply in relation to the school) ...'

(Education Act 2002, Section 101 (1)(a))

A locally agreed syllabus must make appropriate provision for all registered pupils between the ages of 5 and 19.

In the case of Key Stage 4 and Post-16 religious education, agreed syllabuses may provide specific programmes of study and/or recommend specific courses that could lead to external qualifications. (For recommendations see pages 28–31.)

‘The curriculum for a maintained school or maintained nursery school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

- (a) promotes the spiritual, moral cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the schools and of society...

(Education Act 2002, Section 99 (1)(a))

‘Section 101 Subsection (1)(a) of the Education Act 2002 (above) does not apply:

- (a) in relation to a nursery class in a primary school, or
- (b) in the case of a maintained special school (provision as to religious education in special schools being made by regulations under section 71 (7) of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998(c.31)).’

(Education Act 2002, Section 101, s.2)

Promoting pupils’ spiritual, moral and cultural development is a statutory requirement for children aged 3 and 4 years old. LEAs and SACREs should provide teachers with non-statutory guidance in order to promote spiritual, moral and cultural development through ‘People, beliefs and questions’. This will provide a framework on which to build statutory religious education for children aged 5. (For recommendations see pages 13–17.)

Responsibilities on schools

Under the requirements of equal opportunities legislation covering race, gender and disability, schools in Wales have a duty towards present and prospective learners to:

- eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote positive attitudes
- promote equal opportunities and encourage participation in all areas of school life.

Every learner should develop a sense of personal and cultural identity that is receptive and respectful towards others. Schools should plan in all subjects to develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes which will enable learners to participate in our multi-ethnic society in Wales. Schools should develop approaches which support the ethnic/cultural identities of all pupils and reflect a range of perspectives, to engage learners and prepare them for life as global citizens.

Schools must work to reduce environmental and social barriers and provide an inclusive curriculum which will offer opportunities for **all** learners to achieve in school in preparation for further learning and life.

Schools will need to plan and work with specialist services to ensure relevant and accessible learning experiences for all. For learners with disabilities in particular, they should make reasonable adjustments in order to:

- improve access to the curriculum
- increase access to education and associated services
- provide information in a range of formats.

Schools should provide access to appropriate equipment and approaches with alternative/adapted activities to ensure the full participation of all learners, including those who use a means of communication other than speech.

For learners whose first language is neither English nor Welsh, schools should take specific action to help them learn both spoken and written English and/or Welsh through the curriculum. Schools should ensure that learners are provided with material which is appropriate to their ability and previous education/experience and which extends their language development and challenges them cognitively.

Learner entitlement

Schools in Wales should teach all programmes of study and frameworks in ways appropriate to learners' developing maturities and abilities. Schools should ensure that learners' preferred systems of communication are used to maximise access to the curriculum and should recognise the value of the home language in learning. Learners should experience a variety of styles to extend their learning.

To enable **all** learners to access relevant skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriate level, schools may use content from earlier or later phases/key stages within the curriculum. Schools should present material in ways suitable for the learners' age, experience, understanding and prior achievement to engage them in the learning process.

For learners working **significantly** below the expected levels at any key stage, schools should design their curriculum to meet the priority needs of their learners. Sufficient flexibility exists within the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners without the need for disapplication. Where it is not possible to cover **all** of the programmes of study for each key stage, the statutory requirement to provide a broad, balanced curriculum can be met by using the full range of subjects as contexts for learning.

For learners working at higher levels, greater challenge should be incorporated by presenting material in ways that extend breadth and depth of study. The level of demand may also be increased through the development and application of communication, number, information and communication technology (ICT) and thinking skills across the curriculum.

Schools should choose material (to be covered in depth or in outline) that will:

- provide a meaningful, relevant and motivating curriculum for their learners
- meet the specific needs of their learners and further their all-round development.

Developing skills across the curriculum

A non-statutory Skills Framework has been developed in order to provide guidance about continuity and progression in thinking skills, communication, number and ICT for learners from 3–19.

At Key Stages 2 and 3, learners should be given opportunities to build on skills they have started to acquire and develop at Foundation Phase. Learners should continue to acquire, develop, practise, apply and refine these skills through group and individual tasks in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. Progress can be seen in terms of the refinement of these skills and by their application to tasks that move from: concrete to abstract; simple to complex; personal to the 'big picture'; familiar to unfamiliar; and supported to independent and interdependent.

Thinking

Learners develop their thinking across the curriculum through the processes of **planning**, **developing** and **reflecting**.

In religious education, pupils develop thinking skills through a range of activities. Pupils ask fundamental questions which are raised by human experience, the world and aspects of religion. They explore and make links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices that they study. They plan investigations by gathering and utilising a range of religious and non-religious sources and use these to evaluate and justify their personal responses. They use a range of critical and creative problem solving techniques in order to develop ideas and explore and challenge interpretations, preconceptions and possibilities.

Communication

Learners develop their communication skills across the curriculum through the skills of **oracy**, **reading**, **writing** and **wider communication**.

In religious education, pupils develop skills in oracy, reading, writing and wider communication skills through a range of activities. Pupils ask questions and communicate ideas and express their own feelings and opinions using different forms as appropriate to the audience and purpose of the activity. They listen carefully to others, noting the strengths and weaknesses of viewpoints or lines of reasoning. They use different reading/ writing strategies depending on the investigation or activity they are undertaking and show increasing understanding of religious/symbolic language with a growing awareness of the range of possible interpretation.

ICT

Learners develop their ICT skills across the curriculum by **creating, presenting, finding and developing information and ideas** and by using a wide range of equipment and software.

In religious education, pupils use ICT to communicate and share information, using, for example, emails and PowerPoint; to present information in a variety of formats using word processing and graphics; to find and develop information on the internet and other sources including CD-ROMs etc.; to support oral presentations and the creation of ideas and strategies to improve the impact of their work.

Number

Learners develop their number skills across the curriculum by **using mathematical information, calculating, and interpreting and presenting results**.

In religious education, pupils develop skills in the application of number by using information such as ordering events in time, measuring time through the calendars of various religions, calculating percentages of tithing and by considering the significance of number within religions. They interpret results/data and present findings from questionnaires, graphs and other forms of data in order to draw conclusions and ask further questions about issues relating to religion and the world.

Curriculum Cymreig and personal and social education across the curriculum

At Key Stages 2 and 3, learners should be given opportunities to build on their experiences at the Foundation Phase and promote their knowledge and understanding of Wales, and their personal and social development and well-being.

Curriculum Cymreig



Learners should be given opportunities to develop and apply their knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales.

Religious education contributes to the Curriculum Cymreig by allowing children to appreciate the significance, value and impact of the rich Christian heritage and dynamic multi-faith composition of Wales past and present. Through the Welsh language pupils gain a deeper insight into their religious heritage and through dynamic teaching resources (including visits, visitors, local events, sites of religious interest, local business ventures and charities) are introduced to challenging philosophical, ethical and theological thinking of the present age. The experience of pupils who live in Wales provides the backdrop for them to ask fundamental questions about meaning and the purpose of life and the impact and significance of religion and religious thinking on twenty-first century society, challenging questions about our economic affluence and Wales' responsibility to, and relationship with, its own citizens and those in other parts of the world.

Personal and social education



Learners should be given opportunities to promote their health and well-being and moral and spiritual development; to become active citizens and promote sustainable development and global citizenship; and to prepare for lifelong learning.

Religious education contributes to learners' personal and social education by allowing pupils' study to inform and develop their own religious/non-religious feelings and opinions. Religious education focuses on developing awareness and understanding of a variety of world religions exploring how these impact on the decisions made, and lifestyles adopted by, individuals and societies within various cultures around the world. Pupils are encouraged to develop respect for and tolerance of the feelings and opinions of others, whilst developing an understanding of the importance of equality, justice, peace, right and wrong. Pupils should be encouraged to evaluate these qualities for themselves and make appropriate judgements. Pupils will focus on the desire of many religions to foster sustainability and global citizenship, stimulating pupils to respond personally. Religious education provides opportunities for pupils to explore the spiritual dimension so that they may recognise the significance of the non-material for religious and non-religious people, encouraging them to question the values and meanings of their lives and the lives of others.

Religious education in the Foundation Phase

Within the Foundation Phase children are inquisitive and naturally ask questions about life and the world around them. Children are fascinated by themselves, their families, other people and the wonders of the world. This fascination relates directly to their spiritual, moral and cultural development and can be fostered through experiences concerned with 'People, beliefs and questions'. This natural interest and enthusiasm makes children want to access, during the Foundation Phase, appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills which provide the essential underpinnings for Key Stage 2 religious education. Through engaging, practical, integrated activities children can learn more about themselves, other people and the world around them and develop an understanding of their rich cultural and religious heritage in Wales. Knowledge of their own heritage and traditions (through stories and role play) helps them to understand more about themselves and helps them to develop understanding and respect for the viewpoints of others, which can help to develop tolerance and attitudes of responsibility. Through play children develop their ideas, opinions and feelings with imagination, creativity and sensitivity which can help inform their view of the world, their hopes, and their dreams. When expressing their own feelings and opinions they can identify how their actions may affect others, recognise that other people's viewpoints differ from their own and reflect on and revise their own perspectives on life as appropriate.

Skills

To experience the familiar world through investigating the indoor and outdoor environment, children should be encouraged to be curious and find out by:

- exploring and experimenting
- thinking about questions and then asking them and listening to the answers
- listening to the ideas of others
- identifying what they want to find out and how to do it
- thinking about what might happen if...
- becoming aware of human achievements and the 'big ideas' that have shaped the world
- investigating sources and issues
- making observations and keeping records
- making comparisons and identifying similarities and differences
- sorting and grouping information, using ICT on some occasions
- seeing links between cause and effect
- making links within elements of 'Knowledge and understanding of the world'

Religious education in the Foundation Phase

- thinking creatively and imaginatively
- communicating observations
- describing what they have found out and offering simple explanations
- expressing their own opinions, feelings and making decisions whilst considering the viewpoints of others
- using and becoming familiar with common words and phrases for their world
- reflecting on and evaluating their own and others' work.

Range

Throughout the Foundation Phase children should have opportunities to:

- explore a wide range of stimuli
- engage with resources from a variety of contexts including interactive forms
- investigate indoor and outdoor learning environments including natural conditions as they arise
- participate in different types of play and a range of planned activities, including those that are child-initiated and those that are built on previous experiences
- work on their own and in small and large groups.

People, beliefs and questions

'People, beliefs and questions' relates to the experiences that arise naturally through 'Knowledge and understanding of the world' and other areas of learning in the Foundation Phase. Links should be made with other areas of learning whenever possible and should specifically focus on:

- stories and activities that provide an insight into religion and religious people
- how religion has influenced and guided people's lives, past and present, including the emphasis of religion on spirituality and religious experience, in Wales and the wider world
- questions about belief and action that arise from the stories and activities
- signs, symbols and imagery (including artefacts) as providing different types of meaning
- their own personal responses to religious and moral questions
- the wonder of the world and how and why religions show concern/care/responsibility for living things and for the natural world
- religious and moral questions so that they can go on to ask and explore more complex questions about human experience, the world and aspects of religion.

The Foundation Phase will promote children's spiritual, moral and cultural development across all the areas of learning and more specifically through the exploration of 'People, beliefs and questions'.

People, beliefs and questions for children aged three and four

A locally agreed syllabus should provide non-statutory entitlement for children aged 3 and 4 which provides the basis on which to develop statutory provision for children aged 5–7 years. At 3–4 years of age children will concentrate on accessing cultural and traditional stories and practical experiences relating to spiritual and moral endeavour. These stories and experiences will encourage children to become aware of and ask questions about:

Themselves

- their homes, families and experiences in order to explore their identity (*including Curriculum Cymreig, cultural diversity*)
- their likes, dislikes and feelings (*including hopes, dreams, opinions and sense of fun*)
- their role and place in the community (*as a member of their family, out of school activities*)
- choices that they make (*sharing, kindness, behaviour*)
- deeper spiritual/moral meaning expressed in stories, poems, artefacts, art, movement, rituals and celebrations (*birthdays, St David's Day, traditional stories about people who help others, dealing with happy and sad times*)

Other people

- other people's homes, families and experiences in order to explore similarities and differences of lifestyle and traditions (*family celebrations and traditions*)
- special people and people who help them (*stories about influential people past and present such as St. David, their family, teachers and people in the community*)
- likes, dislikes and feelings (*including sharing hopes, dreams, opinions and a sense of fun with others*)
- people's roles and place in the community (*as members of families and groups*)
- decisions other people make (*rules, routines, consequences of choice, as part of a community*)
- reasons why other people express a deeper spiritual/moral empathy towards other people (*exploring why people help others in their work and free time*)
- the need to respect/challenge their own ideas/beliefs and those of other people (*ask questions, share ideas and opinions*)

Religious education in the Foundation Phase

Living things

- the ways in which they and others show care, concern and respect for living things, the environment and the natural world (*taking responsibility for animals/plants, asking questions and sharing opinions*)
- responsibility/recycling/global concern for the world (*finding out how people can make a difference*)
- awe/wonder (*investigation of nature, the natural world and the seasons*).

People, beliefs and questions for children aged five to seven

Within religious education at 5–7 years of age, in addition to the spiritual, moral and cultural, children will focus on the way in which specific religious stories and activities build on previous experience.

Through developing their skills of enquiry, investigation and experimentation across all the areas of learning of the Foundation Phase, children should have opportunities to prepare for Key Stage 2 by extending their knowledge and understanding of:

Themselves

- their homes, families and experiences in order to explore their identity and belonging (*personal experiences of festivals, celebrations, rites of passage including Curriculum Cymreig, cultural diversity*)
- their personal responses (*in times of joy and sadness, their hopes, dreams, opinions and sense of fun*)
- their role and place in the community (*as a member of their family, group activities, charity work*)
- the decisions that they make and resulting consequences (*behaviour, choice, attitudes*)
- deeper spiritual/moral meaning expressed in the stories, poems, artefacts, art, movement, rituals and celebrations (*religious stories, dealing with happy and sad times, asking about big questions*)

Other people

- other people's homes, families and experiences in order to explore similarities and differences of lifestyle and traditions (*experience of religious festivals, worship, rules, food*)
- special people and people who help them (*stories about Jesus and other influential religious people past and present*)
- personal responses (*including sharing feelings, ideas, experiences, opinions and a sense of fun with others*)
- people's roles and place in the community (*as members of families, religious groups, local religious leaders*)

- decisions other people make and resulting consequences (*rules, routines, choices, being part of a community*)
- reasons why other people express a deeper spiritual/moral empathy towards other people (*exploring why people help others in their work and free time – do their beliefs influence their lives?*)
- the need to respect/challenge their own ideas/beliefs and those of other people (*ask questions, share ideas and opinions*)

Living things

- the ways in which they and others show care, concern and respect for living things, the environment and the natural world (*taking responsibility for animals/plants, asking questions and sharing opinions*)
- responsibility/recycling/global concern for the world (*finding out how people can make a difference*)
- awe/wonder (*investigation of nature, the natural world and the seasons*).

During this phase of education children should also extend their skills so they can begin to:

- develop insights into religion and religious people
- understand about belief and action
- recognise and appreciate how religion has influenced and guided people's lives past and present, including an emphasis on spirituality and religious experience
- raise increasingly complex religious and moral questions and issues about human experience, the world and aspects of religion.

Religious education at Key Stage 2

At Key Stage 2, religious education fosters pupils' interest and wonder in the world and human experience. This stimulates them into raising and investigating deep questions that relate to their personal experiences, religion and life in general, thus building on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired during the Foundation Phase. Through practical stimulating activities and exploration of religion in their Welsh locality and in Britain pupils will develop skills and gather information that will help them think creatively about some fundamental religious and moral questions and share ideas through discussion. Knowledge of religion(s) and a recognition of the importance that religion plays in people's lives will help to develop tolerance and respect, and will help foster responsible attitudes in local and global society. Through active participation pupils will explore the spiritual and moral dimensions in order to inform their own search for meaning and purpose. Pupils will express their own feelings and opinions, identify how their actions may affect others, recognise that other people's viewpoints differ from their own and reflect on and revise their own perspectives on life as appropriate.

Religious education at Key Stage 3

At Key Stage 3, religious education stimulates pupils to think for themselves in order to develop an understanding of life, the world, and search for meaning that inspires them to bring about transformation personally, socially and globally, thus building on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired at Key Stage 2. By engaging in practical activities, stimulating discussion and personal investigations of religion in their Welsh locality, in Britain and globally through the media, pupils will apply and evaluate their insights concerned with some fundamental religious and moral questions and in doing so will be given opportunities to think creatively and ask deeper and more challenging questions. Knowledge of religion(s) and the impact that religion and religious ideas have nationally and globally will foster greater understanding of the significance of religion and its importance in promoting social cohesion, stability, global citizenship and sustainability. Through stimulating experiences pupils will reflect on the spiritual and moral dimensions of life recognising the importance of the non-material for both religious and non-religious people. Pupils will be given opportunities to express and justify their own feelings and opinions about their search for meaning with sufficient stimuli to inspire and promote openness to new ideas.

Key Stage 2 National Exemplar Programme of Study

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop their skills, and their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and use these to raise and respond to fundamental human and religious questions. This should be carried out through the **three interrelated core elements** of the subject, namely:

- **Fundamental questions** – as raised by human experience, the world and aspects of religion
- **Beliefs, teachings and practice(s)** – religious stories, sacred texts, lifestyle, rituals and symbolism, which provide insight regarding these fundamental questions and raise different religious and human questions
- **Personal expression and response** – relating the issues raised during study to pupils' own experiences and allowing the development of personal insights.

These core elements inform one another and all three should be applied to the range studied.

Skills

Engaging with fundamental questions

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- ask, discuss and respond to fundamental questions raised by their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion
- interrogate a range of evidence from religious and non-religious sources, including other disciplines, in order to consider the issues raised
- use evidence from a range of sources effectively in order to present and support arguments and opinions
- develop alternative explanations and suggest new possibilities
- carry out investigation in an open-minded way and be prepared to accept challenge in the light of new information or evidence.

Range

The range sets out the context/scope of study which can add challenge to traditional topics, allow pupils to respond to a specific fundamental question and/or to stimulate thinking about a range of interrelated questions. The range should not be taken as a list of content/topics to be studied. During the course of a whole key stage it would be reasonable to expect every aspect of the range to have been embraced.

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop skills through the following:

The world

- **the origin and purpose of life** – interpretations of the beginning of the world/life and how they influence people's lives, *e.g. ideas regarding creation, responsibility and meaning*
- **the natural world and living things** – the ways in which religions show concern and responsibility, *e.g. stewardship, sustainability, life as a gift etc.*
- **the journey of life** – the various stages and how they are acknowledged and celebrated in religion, *e.g. rites of passage, celebrations and responses to natural occurrences*



Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- recall, describe and begin to explain religious beliefs, teachings and practices
- explore and make links between religious beliefs, teachings and practices
- describe and begin to explain the impact that religion has on the lives of believers
- identify the similarities and differences within and across religions
- recognise and begin to interpret layers of meaning/symbolism within religious stories, rituals, art, dance and music.

Expressing personal responses

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- express and begin to justify their own feelings and opinions in different ways, e.g. *orally, in writing, and through creative arts*
- demonstrate how what they have learned has impacted on their own views/ideas
- consider, appreciate and respect the viewpoints of others
- recognise, explore and reflect on the spiritual side of life
- use a range of religious language appropriately
- use ICT and other means to gain access to information and to communicate religious concepts.



Human experience

- **human identity** – the ways in which religions understand human existence, e.g. *the image of God, uniqueness and spirituality*
- **meaning and purpose of life** – how religious ideas and beliefs influence responses to life and death, e.g. *the ways in which religion can influence/change people's lives and/or attitudes*
- **belonging** – the sense of identity and commitment shared by local believers, e.g. *religious celebrations at home and in the local community*
- **authority and influence** – different forms of authority, e.g. *religious stories, sacred texts, historical and contemporary religious leaders, and religious codes that guide and influence people's lives*



- **relationships and responsibility** – the importance that religion places on personal relationships, e.g. *the importance of rules, religious community*

Search for meaning

- **non-material/spiritual** – ideas about reflection and about life being spiritual and more than just material/physical, e.g. *awe and wonder in religion*
- **knowledge and experience regarding the non-material/spiritual** – ways in which people develop an understanding of religious/spiritual experience, e.g. *relationship with God, lifestyle, commitment, worship, prayer, music, dance, meditation, fasting.*

Key Stage 3 National Exemplar Programme of Study

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop their skills, their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and use these to raise and respond to fundamental human and religious questions. This should be carried out through the **three interrelated core elements** of the subject, namely:

- **Fundamental questions** – as raised by human experience, the world and aspects of religion
- **Beliefs, teachings and practice(s)** – religious stories, sacred texts, lifestyle, rituals and symbolism which provide insight regarding these fundamental questions and raise different religious and human questions
- **Personal expression and response** – relating the issues raised during study to pupils' own experiences and allowing the development of personal insights.

These core elements inform one another and all three should be applied to the range and context studied.

Skills

Engaging with fundamental questions

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- ask, discuss and respond to fundamental questions raised by their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion
- draw on their own experiences and on a variety of informed religious and non-religious sources, including other disciplines, in order to gather evidence and develop appropriate arguments
- use problem solving techniques, critical, creative and intuitive thinking to explore preconceptions, possibilities/explanations
- formulate arguments and justify points of view whilst recognising that the conclusions are only partial, inconclusive and are open to different interpretations.

Range

The range sets out the context/scope of study which can add challenge to traditional topics, allow pupils to respond to a specific fundamental question and/or to stimulate thinking about a range of interrelated questions. The range should not be taken as a list of content/topics to be studied. During the course of a whole key stage it would be reasonable to expect every aspect of the range to have been embraced.

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop skills through the following:

The world

- **the origin and purpose of life** – contemporary debates about how religions view the natural world and value living things, e.g. *creation, responsibility, relationships between the natural world, human beings and God, sanctity of life*

- **the natural world and living things** – the ways in which individual religions acknowledge the importance of taking responsibility for the natural world and living things and implement their beliefs through action, e.g. *sustainability, stewardship, life as a gift*
- **the journey of life** – the ways in which religion understands roles and responsibilities at different stages of life, e.g. *roles and responsibilities within family/community*


Human experience

- **human identity** – consideration of the nature of humanity and its implications, e.g. *humans as more than just animals, humans as rational/conscious beings, humans in the image of God, freedom/responsibility*
- **meaning and purpose of life** – ways in which religion provides insight into questions of truth, meaning, purpose and value, e.g. *life/death/life after death, good/evil/suffering/hope etc.*




Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)


Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- recall, describe, and explain the religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated
- make and investigate the links between religious beliefs, teachings and practices to demonstrate understanding of a range of religious ideas/concepts
- describe and give explanations for the similarities and differences within and across religions
- explain how religion impacts on the lives of individuals, communities and society, using a range of interpretations 
- analyse and interpret the layers of meaning/symbolism within religious stories, rituals, art, dance and music.

Expressing personal responses

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- communicate religious ideas and concepts using reasoned argument, personal opinions and ideas in a variety of creative ways, e.g. orally, in writing, and through creative arts
- explain how what they have learned about religious/spiritual experience and moral decision-making might relate to their own and other people's lives
- appreciate, respect and evaluate the viewpoints of others, acknowledging where they are similar to and different from their own
- recognise, explore and reflect on the spiritual side of life
- use a range of religious language appropriately
- use ICT and other means to gain access to information and to communicate religious concepts. 

- **belonging** – the ways in which individuals, local communities and society express religious identity and demonstrate commitment, e.g. *worship, celebration, lifestyle etc.* 
- **authority and influence** – issues involved with conveying religious authority including ideas regarding revelation, wisdom and truth/interpretation, e.g. *religious stories, sacred texts, religious founders, historical and contemporary leaders*
- **relationships and responsibility** – the ways in which religions demonstrate how people should live their lives, develop and retain relationships and make difficult moral decisions, e.g. *right/wrong, rules for living for individuals/communities/society, responsibility/values, justice/equality, tolerance/respect, conflict/reconciliation*

Search for meaning

- **non-material/spiritual** – issues, ideas and expressions of life as being non-material/transcendent, e.g. *the nature of God/the soul, contemporary debates regarding evidence for the existence of God, religious experience/spiritual dimensions of human experience and truth/meaning/interpretation*
- **knowledge and experience of the non-material/spiritual** – the ways people develop, interpret and act on their religious/spiritual experience, e.g. *relationship with and responses to God; lifestyle/sacrifice; impact of religion/religious commitment on individuals, communities and society; identity/diversity within and across religion.*

Outcomes for religious education

The following outcomes for religious education are non-statutory. They have been written to recognise the attainment of pupils working below Level 1. Religious education outcomes 1, 2 and 3 align with the Foundation Phase outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

The religious education outcomes describe the types and range of performance that pupils working at a particular outcome should characteristically demonstrate. In deciding on a pupil's outcome of attainment at the end of a key stage, teachers should judge which description best fits the pupil's performance. Each description should be considered in conjunction with the description for adjacent outcomes.

Outcome 1

Pupils recognise themselves, familiar people, places and objects in pictures/stories and show knowledge of daily routines. Pupils use words, signs or symbols to communicate observations about familiar religious stories and artefacts. With encouragement, pupils begin to communicate about how they feel and about experiences such as visits to special buildings, festivals and celebrations.

Outcome 2

Pupils respond to open questions about their feelings and experiences ('what?', 'where?'). They offer their own ideas, sometimes making connections/predictions. Pupils handle and explore artefacts and show some knowledge of special people, books, and places of worship. They respond to stories and events, past and present. They begin to identify with the feelings of others as portrayed in religious stories and events past and present.

Outcome 3

Pupils can remember significant events in the past and anticipate events in the future. Pupils offer independent ideas and observations about things that concern them in their lives. Pupils communicate their developing knowledge of religious stories, events and objects and show some appreciation that these are different from the norm. Pupils are increasingly aware of and are sensitive to the needs of others and understand that living things should be treated with respect and shown concern.

National Exemplar level descriptions for religious education

The following level descriptions describe the types and range of performance that pupils working at a particular level should characteristically demonstrate. 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. Each description should be considered in conjunction with the descriptions for adjacent levels.

By the end of Key Stage 2, the performance of the great majority of pupils should be within the range of Levels 2 to 5, and by the end of Key Stage 3 within the range 3 to 7. Level 8 is available for very able pupils and, to help teachers differentiate Exceptional Performance at Key Stage 3, a description above Level 8 is provided.

All statements made within the levels should be read as they relate to Christianity and the other principal religions as identified within the specific locally agreed syllabus.

Level 1

Pupils talk about their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion. They recall and respond to some basic religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated. They show some awareness that these aspects of religion are special. They recognise that their feelings, actions and opinions may be similar to or different from those of other people. On occasion, they use simple religious vocabulary appropriately to express their ideas.

Level 2

Pupils ask questions about their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion, and suggest some answers. They recall and communicate simply some of the basic religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated. They suggest, in simple terms, why these aspects of religion are important to some people. They talk in simple terms about their own feelings, actions and opinions and those of other people. They use simple religious vocabulary appropriately.

Level 3

Pupils discuss the questions raised by their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion, giving their own opinions. They describe some of the basic religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated. They describe how some of these aspects of religion affect believers' lives. They describe their own feelings, actions and opinions and in simple terms comment on the viewpoints of others. They begin to recognise that religious symbols carry meaning, and use religious vocabulary appropriately.

Level 4

Pupils discuss their own and others' responses to questions about life, the world around them and religion. They describe and begin to explain the religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated. They give specific examples of the ways in which these aspects affect believers' lives and begin to identify the similarities and differences within and across religions. They explain in simple terms how their own feelings, actions and opinions differ from those of others. They recognise some religious symbols and use a range of religious vocabulary appropriately.

Level 5

Pupils express and justify ideas and opinions about fundamental questions in the light of their investigations and experiences. They make links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices studied, describing the impact on believers' lives. They explain how their own feelings, actions and opinions affect their own lives, and describe how those of others similarly affect their lives. They use a range of religious vocabulary appropriately and demonstrate a basic understanding of symbolic language.

Level 6

Pupils draw on a variety of informed sources and their own experiences in order to gather evidence and develop appropriate responses to fundamental questions. They use the links between the religious beliefs, teachings and practices investigated to present an understanding of religion and to explain differing religious viewpoints. They explain the relationship between their own beliefs and actions. They also explain the relationship between other people's beliefs and actions. They use a range of religious vocabulary appropriately and demonstrate an understanding of symbolism and symbolic language.

Level 7

Pupils investigate fundamental religious and moral questions from a variety of religious perspectives and begin to draw reasoned conclusions. They apply a wide range of religious concepts to justify a variety of beliefs, teachings and practices and accurately explain the reasons for the range of viewpoints held by religious people. They consider the implications of their own beliefs and actions, compare these to other people and draw balanced conclusions. They use a range of religious vocabulary appropriately and are able to explain the symbolic meaning of religious objects, actions and/or language.

Level 8

Pupils investigate fundamental religious and moral questions, evaluate a range of possibilities and draw rational conclusions based on evidence gathered. They demonstrate an understanding of a wide range of religious concepts, including various perspectives on beliefs, values and traditions within the religions studied. They evaluate the various aspects of religion and explain how these affect the lives of individuals, communities and society. They investigate the religious concepts studied, evaluating their own and other people's viewpoints through reasoned argument and evidence. They use a wide range of religious vocabulary appropriately and demonstrate a developed understanding of symbolic language.

Exceptional Performance

Pupils acknowledge that fundamental religious questions are often complex and that answers are often partial and inconclusive. They analyse and give reasons for the different perspectives held concerning the beliefs, values and traditions of the religions studied, recognising the differences between religions and appreciating the tension of unity and plurality within each religion. They have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the behaviour and beliefs of adherents of various faith systems. In relation to the religious and moral concepts studied, they express well-considered opinions of the viewpoints of others based on in-depth investigation. They use an extensive range of religious vocabulary appropriately and demonstrate a well-developed understanding of symbolic language.

Religious education at Key Stage 4 and Post-16

At Key Stage 4 and Post-16, religious education stimulates pupils to engage with fundamental questions and issues that relate to their individual needs, meet the demands of the modern world and motivate and challenge their own and others' thinking, thus building on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in the previous key stages. Through active participation and involvement, challenging debate and in-depth investigations of religion and religious/non-religious ideas evident in their Welsh locality, in Britain and globally, pupils should use and apply their knowledge to present theories and create hypotheses, thus stimulating deeper and more challenging questions. An in-depth and extensive knowledge and understanding of religion and religious ideas will foster cultural sensitivity and respect, the valuing of diversity, greater social cohesion and responsibility locally, nationally and globally. Religious education crystallises spiritual and moral development, and can stimulate expressive personal responses when pupils discover worlds and values beyond the mundane and material, and when they become illuminated by newly understood connections or awareness. Through their exploration pupils should begin to understand that conclusions drawn regarding fundamental and personal questions are partial, inconclusive and open to different interpretations.

The National Exemplar Framework for Religious Education provides exemplar Programmes of Study for Key Stage 4 and Post-16. The skills at Key Stage 4 and Post-16 are the same, but the range is different.

At Key Stage 4, the framework provides an exemplar Programme of Study that relates to the requirements of current GCSE qualifications, but also provides suggestions for innovative school-based enrichment courses that relate to the 14–19 Learning Core and/or other appropriate qualifications, e.g. Key Skills/Welsh Baccalaureate. Assessment for such studies would either be carried out formally through the procedures adopted by an awarding body or by setting school-specific outcomes guided by the National Exemplar Levels.

The wide ranging exemplar Programme of Study for pupils at Post-16 can be implemented in a variety of innovative ways as part of a school enrichment programme. They relate to the 14–19 Learning Core and/or other appropriate qualifications, e.g. Key Skills/Welsh Baccalaureate, allowing schools to meet their statutory obligations for pupils up to the age of 19. Assessment for such studies would either be carried out formally through the procedures adopted by an awarding body or by setting school-specific outcomes guided by the National Exemplar Levels.



Pupils should be given opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions, and use these to raise and respond to fundamental human and religious questions. This should be carried out through the **three interrelated core elements** of the subject, namely:

- **Fundamental questions** – as raised by human experience, the world and aspects of religion
- **Beliefs, teachings and practice(s)** – religious stories, sacred texts, lifestyle, rituals and symbolism which provide insight regarding these fundamental questions and raise different religious and human questions
- **Personal expression and response** – relating the issues raised during study to pupils' own experiences and allowing the development of personal insights.

These core elements inform one another and all three should be applied to the range and context studied.

Skills for Key Stage 4 and Post-16

Engaging with fundamental questions

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- ask, discuss and respond to fundamental questions raised by their own experiences, the world around them and aspects of religion
- investigate fundamental questions from a variety of informed religious and non-religious sources to evaluate a range of possibilities and begin to draw reasoned conclusions based on the evidence gathered
- work alone and with others to create hypotheses, using problem solving techniques, critical, creative, intuitive thinking and developed metacognition to evaluate a range of preconceptions, possibilities and explanations
- evaluate and justify arguments and points of view whilst recognising that the conclusions are only partial, inconclusive and are open to different interpretations.

Exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practice(s)

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- recall, describe, and explain the beliefs, teachings and practices of the religions investigated
- make and investigate the links between beliefs, teachings and practices to demonstrate a coherent understanding of religious ideas/concepts

- apply a wide range of religious concepts to present arguments for and against a variety of beliefs, teachings and practices and accurately explain a range of viewpoints held by religious people
- consider evidence on how religion impacts on the lives of individuals, communities and society, evaluating a range of interpretations
- analyse, interpret and evaluate the layers of meaning/symbolism within religious stories, rituals, art, dance and music.

Expressing personal responses

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- communicate religious ideas and concepts using reasoned argument, personal opinions and ideas in a variety of creative ways, e.g. *orally, in writing, and through creative arts*
- evaluate how learning about the varieties of religious/spiritual experience and moral decisions might impact on their own and other people's lives
- appreciate, respect and evaluate the viewpoints of others so that they may draw their own reasoned conclusions and develop positive attitudes
- reflect on interpretations of the spiritual side of life
- use a wide range of religious vocabulary and demonstrate a developed understanding of symbolic language
- use ICT and other means to gain access to information, to communicate religious concepts.





Key Stage 4 and Post-16 National Exemplar Programme of Study

Range for accredited/non-accredited statutory RE at Key Stage 4

The range sets out the context/scope of study which can add challenge to traditional topics, allow pupils to respond to a specific fundamental question and/or to stimulate thinking about a range of interrelated questions. The range should not be taken as a list of content/topics to be studied. During the course of a whole key stage it would be reasonable to expect every aspect of the range to have been embraced.

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop skills through the following:

The world

- **the place, purpose and value of life** – the reciprocal influence and impact of religion on relationships, communities and cultures in Wales, Europe and the world, e.g. *the challenges of relationships (human/Divine), the future of community, diversity of culture and religion* 
- **the natural world and living things** – ways in which religion inspires people to take action within the local and global community, e.g. *community service volunteers; local, national and global aid agencies; the influence of religion on citizenship; stewardship; sustainability; animal rights; sanctity of life* 
- **the journey of life** – ways in which religion influences personal and collective identity, e.g. *fashion, sport, leisure time, worship and celebration, upbringing, local community*

Human experience

- **human identity** – ways in which human nature and identity is perceived and valued in religion and culture in the twenty-first century, e.g. *human attitudes and values, selfishness and selflessness, fairness, justice and equality*
- **meaning and purpose of life** – issues of truth, meaning, purpose and value in religion, e.g. *good, evil, free will, fate, suffering, innocence, hope, life/death/life after death* –

issues arising from religious and non-religious interpretations of contemporary events and phenomena, e.g. *political decision making; public expenditure; natural disasters; individual, national and global debt*

- **belonging** – ways in which religion inspires commitment, engagement, dedication, reflection and aspiration, e.g. *parallels between sport and religion; use and abuse of leisure time; expressions of faith through study, action, meditation and worship*
- **authority and influence** – the impact that religion has in the decision making process of individuals and communities in Wales, Europe and the world, e.g. *challenges to religious freedom, freedom of speech/information/movement, sacred/secular laws, human/civil rights, conscience, justice, liberation, war, peace, reconciliation* 
- **relationships and responsibility** – the impact that religion has on personal, social and moral development of self and others, e.g. *rules for living, rights and duties, embracing diversity, attitudes towards and use of resources, challenges to religion in the work place/careers choices/vocation, human dignity, equality, integrity, tolerance, responsibility*

Search for meaning

- **non-material/spiritual** – traditional and contemporary expressions of religious experience and spirituality, e.g. *the nature of God, symbolism/imagery, experience of God, reasons for belief in God, faith and doubt*
- **knowledge and experience of the non-material/spiritual** – the strength of religious/spiritual conviction that enables people to dare to be different and to take a stand to instigate positive change, e.g. *relationship with and responses to God; impact of religion/religious commitment on individuals, communities and society; identity/diversity within and across religion.*



Range for accredited/non-accredited statutory RE at Post-16

The range sets out the context/scope of study which can add challenge to traditional topics, allow pupils to respond to a specific fundamental question and/or to stimulate thinking about a range of interrelated questions. The range should not be taken as a list of content/topics to be studied. During the course of a whole key stage it would be reasonable to expect every aspect of the range to have been embraced.

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop skills through the following:

The world

- **the place, purpose and value of life** – ways in which religion emphasises the value and worth of human existence, *e.g. motives, decisions and consequences, exploitation and modern slavery, justification for fair trade/equality/justice*
- **the natural world and living things** – religious justifications and objections to use and abuse of the natural world and living things, *e.g. medical ethic, interpretations of natural law, governance of the world*
- **the journey of life** – religious interpretations of creation and the purpose of humanity, *e.g. nature versus nurture, interpretations of fate, destiny and salvation*

Human experience

- **human identity** – questions about religious certainty and truth in contemporary society, *e.g. interpretations of God, reality TV, truth and honesty in the media, hedonism*
- **meaning and purpose of life** – ways in which religious and contemporary values and ideas influence self worth and perception of others, *e.g. media portrayal of God, religion, morality; media depiction of role models, inspirational figures and celebrities*

- **belonging** – the global village and its implications for religion, *e.g. multicultural society, pluralism, richness and diversity, global accessibility, erosion of traditional values, rise of electronic communication and the breakdown of relationships*
- **authority and influence** – ways in which religious and secular authorities are undermined by the contemporary media and entertainment industries, *e.g. sexist videos and music, sensationalism of violence, trivialization of sexual behaviour*
- **relationships and responsibility** – the ways in which religion, government and world wide organisations impact on global harmony/discord, *e.g. responsibilities of the UN, liberation theology, war/peace, democracy/rule of God*



Search for meaning

- **non-material/spiritual** – traditional and contemporary definitions and understanding of religious experience and spirituality, *e.g. is religion active or passive?, religious experience through the media, psychology's/religions' views of conscience/consciousness*
- **knowledge and experience of the non-material/spiritual** – the impact of the non-material/religious/spiritual on individuals, communities and societies and the ways in which this impact is hindered/promoted by secular society, *e.g. portrayal of near-death experiences/miracles in the media, politics, apathy/commitment/extremism.*

