

SECTION THREE
Teaching and Learning in
Religious Education

“Growing Together”



Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

This section of the syllabus is designed to help people to recognise what they need to do to help all pupils to make the best progress possible in Religious Education.

The section encourages teachers to adopt a wide variety of professional pedagogy and use a varied range of teaching and learning strategies in order to make RE dynamic and challenging for all pupils. It focuses teachers' attention on the key attitudes, concepts and skills that need to be developed to help pupils to learn about and learn from religion and belief throughout all key stages.

Learning Processes and Pedagogies in Religious Education

Enquiry: the processes for learning

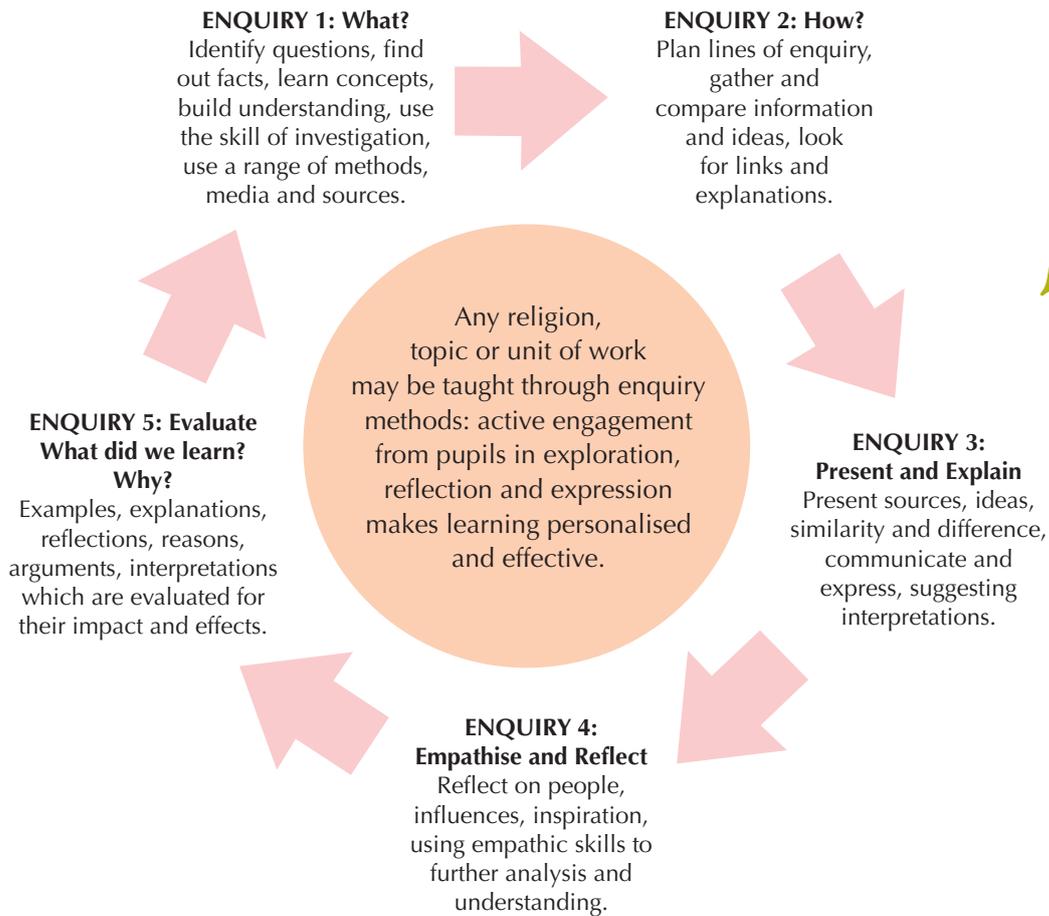
The Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus, "Growing Together", recognises that RE teaching needs to use enquiry processes if pupils are to learn for themselves. These processes, at work in the whole curriculum, are suited to learning needs across the age range. The units of study in this syllabus are all question-based and the exemplified units in the Support Materials that accompany the syllabus focus on key questions throughout.

RE improves where teachers don't just transmit knowledge but enable pupils to be active, thoughtful, reflective and expressive in their handling of questions about beliefs, religion, spirituality and values.



The diagram on the following page shows how any unit of work could be approached and taught through enquiry methods. This means that pupils are actively engaged in exploration, reflection and expression, making learning personalised and effective.





Pedagogy for learning in Religious Education

The human brain has a phenomenal capacity to learn and over the last twenty years there has been a wealth of neuro-scientific research into how the brain functions. This has led to extensive research into how children learn, as well as the exploration of new approaches to teaching and learning.

We know that we all learn in a variety of different ways. This Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education therefore requires a wide range of teaching and learning methods to be employed by teachers so that all pupils can make progress at a good pace and achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. Teachers should use active processes of learning as well as factual or knowledge-based instruction.





In particular, this means that RE will make use of the widest possible range of key strategies for learning.

A wide literature exists on pedagogy in RE but the following starting points will help any teacher to see how learning strategies can be translated into action.

Six examples of different pedagogies (learning strategies) are given here and are elaborated upon in the guidance paper on pedagogy in RE, which can be found in the Support Materials on the accompanying CD Rom.

It is important for teachers to consider these approaches and ensure that they use this broad range of strategies with pupils. This will enable all pupils to encounter approaches that particularly help them to learn and widen their experience of a range of styles of learning.

1

The Phenomena of Religion: developing understanding

A teacher plans to introduce a class to the Muslim religion for the first time and uses a selection of artefacts from the mosque. Children are asked to develop their understanding of what Muslims do, what they say and think about their actions. Pupils make a selection of 10 artefacts, images and texts to sum up all they have learned so far about the Muslim faith.

A phenomenological approach:

Focuses on studying religions (in this case, Islam) through stories, moral behaviour, rituals, beliefs, experiences and community life and the art and architecture of the faith.

2

Experiential RE: educating the spirit

A teacher wants to enable spiritual development through RE so uses stilling, guided story and creative imagination to explore increasingly deeply religious and spiritual experiences, questions and beliefs. After a guided story on Pesach which focuses on Jewish concepts of freedom, tradition and community, the pupils express their own spiritual ideas about concepts like these and concepts of love, sacrifice, submission or thankfulness in sculptures and poems.

An experiential approach:

Uses the idea that children have some spiritual capacities of their own and develops this through RE by use of creative imagination.





3

Interpretive RE:
the skills of sense-making

Starting work on Hindu dharma, a teacher begins with four rather contradictory accounts of how Diwali is practised in Northamptonshire and in India today. Emphasising religion as it is lived (not merely history, texts or beliefs), pupils become enquirers themselves into the varieties of religion and belief. The key skill of making sense or interpreting gradually extends pupils' awareness of living communities of faith.

Interpretive approaches:

Takes authentic accounts of the ways members of religions today practise their faith. These learning methods aim to enable pupils to draw meaning from the encounter with religion for themselves, becoming researchers and enquirers in their lessons.

4

Concepts for learning in RE:
educating the spirit

In the unit about Christian beliefs about God, pupils learn three concepts: Incarnation, Trinity and Resurrection. They enquire into the ways these concepts make sense of the Christmas and Easter narratives and how these festivals are celebrated. They develop understanding of beliefs and think about how beliefs can be tested by argument or experience, moving towards analysing for themselves truth claims from religion.

Conceptual learning for religious literacy:

Takes key concepts from religions and world views and from religious studies as a discipline and enables pupils to increase their understanding about religions and beliefs.

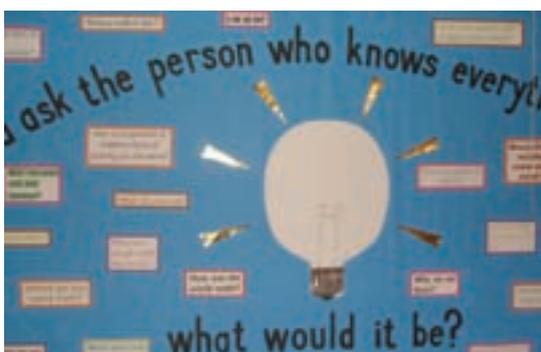
5

Ultimate questions as a focus in RE

Pupils begin a unit of work by raising all the questions they would like to ask of God / the creator / the Supreme Being / the ultimate brain. With stimulus from religious texts and practices, the class use a 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) method. A 'community of enquiry' activity explores the pupils' own questions. Afterwards, the class develop pieces of personal work using their own and religious ideas about the ultimate questions explored.

A humanising approach:

Uses 'big questions' of meaning, purpose and truth to explore the impact of religion on life, to construct meaning and to challenge the learners to deepen their own ideas.



6

Pupils' world views in RE

During teaching about commitment and values, pupils begin with their own commitments and generalise from these. Exploring the ways in which their everyday commitments can be structured into a view of what matters, a view of the world, is more important than gathering understanding of religion, as the aim of RE is to clarify the learner's vision of life.

A world views approach:

Develops answers to human questions, using religious ideas and teachings as a resource for pupils' own development.

"I think religion is the essence of a person's life so it's good to know about everyone's religion. I believe in my religion a lot and rely on it as a backbone to my life and problems and depend on answers from it. So it interests me on how other religions help to answer everyday problems for others and what views and reasons they have for their beliefs."

Thomas

Age 15



Attitudes in Religious Education

Attitudes such as respect for others and respect for the truth, care for all people and a determination to achieve, should be promoted through all areas of school life. There are some attitudes, however, that are fundamental to Religious Education. These attitudes enable learners to enter fully into the study of religions and beliefs and are in turn fostered and deepened by the study of RE.

The following six attitudes are central in the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus, "Growing Together", and are essential for good learning in Religious Education. They should be developed at each stage or phase of Religious Education:

- Self-awareness;
- Respect for all;
- Open-minded questioning;
- Critical awareness;
- Commitment;
- Curiosity, appreciation and wonder.

SIX KEY ATTITUDES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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.

EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS RE CAN BUILD AND DEVELOP THESE ATTITUDES

Pupils may be able to show self-awareness through:

- talking about their own way of life and different ways of life seen in some religions or world views;
- exploring in increasing depth what makes them special or unique;
- being able to value their own way of life as well as that of others;
- expressing and exploring their own sense of what matters most in human life, including reference to values and spirituality;
- using concepts such as identity, faith and culture to explain who they are and where they belong;
- analysing their own beliefs and values carefully and with reference to some religious alternatives;
- developing increasing self-confidence in tandem with empathic appreciation of others.



The SACRE would like to thank all the schools who submitted entries to the competition "Illustrations for the New Agreed Syllabus." The runner-up entries can be seen here and on following pages.



Hollie - Wollaston Community Primary School
Competition Runner-Up

SIX KEY ATTITUDES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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;
- recognising the rights of others to hold their own views;
- avoiding ridicule;
- being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias;
- discerning between what is worthy of respect and what is not;
- appreciating that religious convictions are often deeply felt;
- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others.

EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS RE CAN BUILD AND DEVELOP THESE ATTITUDES

Pupils may be able to show respect for all through:

- talking about what is fair and unfair, just and unjust, for themselves and for others;
- the avoidance of ridicule;
- the development of tolerance and the move from tolerance to respect;
- applying ideas about fairness and respect from religious teachings to a range of different situations;
- the widening and deepening of willingness to learn from others and to respect the rights and views of all;
- considering questions about prejudice, including issues around racism, ethnicity, sexuality, gender or religion and belief, with reference to teachings about equality;
- analysing the causes and consequences of unfairness and suggesting how a more fair society can be built.





Joe - Havelock Junior School
Competition Runner-Up

"I can say my opinions without people answering me back and telling me I am wrong. I can express all my feelings. I learn a lot about other religions which I can apply to my life. I find it really interesting and useful."

Elizabeth
Age 13

SIX KEY ATTITUDES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

OPEN-MINDEDNESS AND QUESTIONING 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;
- having openness to points of view different to one's own;
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith.

EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS RE CAN BUILD AND DEVELOP THESE ATTITUDES

Pupils may be able to show an attitude of open-mindedness through:

- beginning to use information and ideas from other people to answer big questions for themselves;
- talking about the reasons people give for their beliefs;
- describing how people react to the beliefs of others and beginning to see different sides to arguments about religious questions;
- showing that they can hold and justify opinions about religious and spiritual questions, referring to religious sources, arguments and experiences;
- using evidence, reason and experience to express insights into religious or spiritual controversies;
- considering what makes some people narrow-minded or closed to new ideas and what makes others open-minded;
- considering and explaining the differences between superstition, prejudice, opinion, belief, conviction and knowledge;
- applying the idea of open-mindedness critically to their own views as well as others' views.





“From my RE lessons I have learnt to listen to other people and their opinions and to try and empathise with them even if I disagree. I like the variety of topics we discuss and the strong responses which people have.”

Sally
Age 15

Karagh - The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School
Competition Runner-Up

SIX KEY ATTITUDES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CRITICAL AWARENESS in Religious Education includes pupils:

- having a willingness to examine ideas, questions and disputes about religious and spiritual questions;
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs;
- being prepared to reconsider existing views;
- developing the ability to argue respectfully, reasonably and evidentially about religious and spiritual questions;
- being prepared to acknowledge bias and prejudice in oneself.

EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS RE CAN BUILD AND DEVELOP THESE ATTITUDES

Pupils may be able to show critical awareness through:

- beginning to notice that lots of RE questions have more than one answer that is interesting;
- talking about mysteries and puzzling things in RE;
- describing how people can argue about a belief in ways that weigh up both sides;
- showing that they can be self critical about understanding beliefs and that they can criticise beliefs they don't agree with reasonably (i.e. without ridicule);
- using evidence, reason and experience to make a critical commentary on beliefs they reject;
- considering questions about how we discover the truth in areas of value, identity and meaning by using a range of viewpoints;
- explaining some strong and some weak arguments or reasons for holding a belief;
- interpreting the arguments and ideas of others in ways that are alert to accuracy, rationality, coherence and philosophical skills.





Wilfie - Hackleton C of E Primary School
Competition Runner-Up

"We have a lot of discussions in our RE lessons and I learn to appreciate other people's views and opinions because, even if they are not the same as my own, they are still as correct to them as mine are to me, making them just as important and justified."

Bradley
Age 14

SIX KEY ATTITUDES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

COMMITMENT in Religious Education includes pupils:

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

"I like RE because it's interesting. Sometimes we talk about death and it makes me sad but then happy memories come back to me about the people that have died in my life that were close to me."

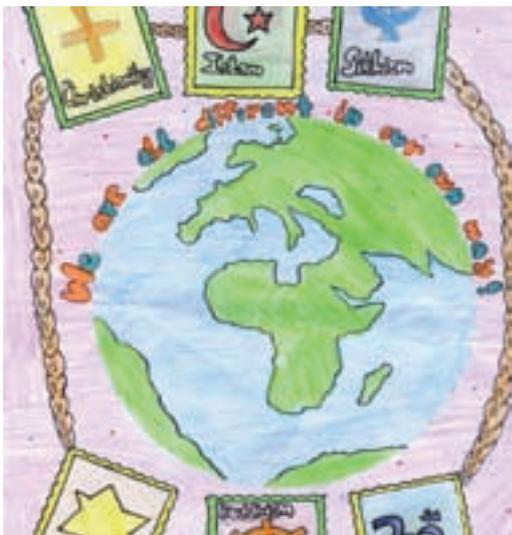
Archie
Age 11

EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS RE CAN BUILD AND DEVELOP THESE ATTITUDES

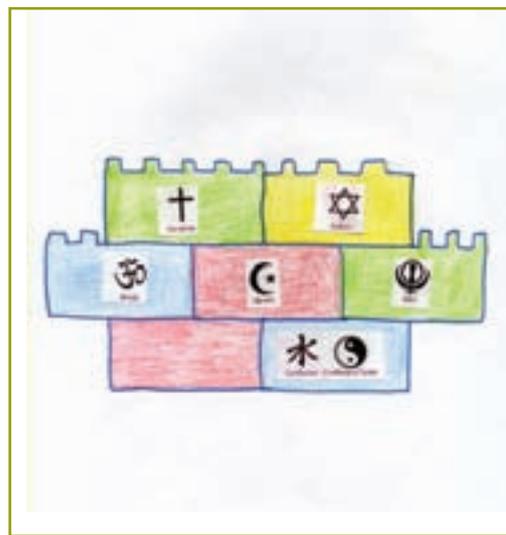
Pupils may be able to show commitment through:

- talking about what matters most to them and what matters most to others;
- learning the meaning of the word 'commitment' and beginning to apply the idea for themselves;
- trying out and developing attitudes that value their own commitments and notice those of others;
- applying ideas about being committed to a religion so that they see the impact of religious convictions for themselves;
- widening and deepening their learning about the signs and symbols, actions and motives of people committed to different religions;
- considering their own commitments carefully and facing the challenges of avoiding hypocrisy;
- reasoning and analysing examples of commitment that benefit humanity – and some that don't seem to.





Jananie - All Saints C of E Primary School
Competition Runner-Up



Samuel - Brackley C of E Junior School
Competition Runner-Up

SIX KEY ATTITUDES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

EXAMPLES OF THE WAYS RE CAN BUILD AND DEVELOP THESE ATTITUDES

CURIOSITY, 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.

Pupils may be able to show appreciation and wonder through:

- taking time to think and reflect in RE;
- engaging in and enjoying experiences that stimulate wonder;
- asking questions about the 'why' of religion and suggesting answers that refer to religious teachings and their own ideas;
- being increasingly able to talk about mystery and about what is puzzling or profound in life;
- practising openness and thoughtful reflection on mysterious experiences and questions with increasing insight and discernment;
- analysing the differences between religious viewpoints and accounting for these with discernment in their own terms.

The development of these attitudes is not of course exclusive to Religious Education. Other areas such as Personal, Social and Health Education, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Citizenship Education are ones in which commonality may be found.





The Fields of Enquiry for Religious Education

All curriculum areas have key concepts that need to be developed in order to drive progression and understanding within a subject. Religious Education is no different.

In the Programmes of Study for Key Stages One and Two, these concepts have been listed in clusters and called “Fields of Enquiry”. They have then been woven into the attainment targets, making clear the areas of learning in which pupils need to be engaged.

In the Secondary Curriculum Programmes of Study (of the National Curriculum) for each subject these “Fields of Enquiry” are referred to as Key Concepts. To enable Secondary teachers to compare subjects and plan for cross curriculum studies, the Key Stage Three and 14-19 Programmes of Study in this syllabus use the term “Key Concepts”.

Pupils need to grasp the six concept clusters which make up RE’s Fields of Enquiry. This understanding broadens and deepens their knowledge, skills and understanding when learning about and learning from religion and belief.

The six concept clusters are:

AT1: Learning about religion and belief

Beliefs, teachings and sources:

- interpreting teachings, sources, authorities and ways of life in order to understand religions and beliefs;
- understanding and responding critically to beliefs and attitudes.

Practices and ways of life:

- exploring the impact of religions and beliefs on how people live their lives;
- understanding that religious practices are diverse, change over time and are influenced by cultures.

Forms of expressing meaning:

- appreciating that individuals and cultures express their beliefs and values through many different forms.





Exploring the wonders of nature with Reception children.

AT2: Learning from religion and belief

Identity, diversity and belonging:

- understanding how individuals develop a sense of identity and belonging through faith or belief;
- exploring the variety, difference and relationships that exist within and between religions, values and beliefs.

Meaning, purpose and truth:

- exploring some of the big/ultimate questions that confront humanity and responding imaginatively to them.

Values and commitments:

- understanding how moral values and a sense of obligation can come from beliefs and experience;
- evaluating their own and others' values in order to make informed, rational and imaginative choices.

These Fields of Enquiry/Concept Clusters need to be covered in a balanced, structured way so that the pupils' learning outcomes (as exemplified in the Level Descriptions) can be clearly seen and assessed.

The Programmes of Study for each key stage in this syllabus are an important vehicle for delivering and promoting the Fields of Enquiry.

The exemplified units of work in the Support Materials state which Fields of Enquiry are targeted in each particular unit and then go on to list specific concepts which can be developed (e.g. Commitment, Authority, Belief, Tradition, Identity, etc).

"I like RE because it makes you think about life."

Nina

Age 8





Setting up our World Faith Room and Multi-Faith Prayer Team.



Skills for Learning in Religious Education

Progress in Religious Education is also dependent upon the development and application of key skills.

All curriculum areas in the primary curriculum have key skills. These skills are also reflected in the “Key Processes” sections of the Secondary Curriculum Programmes of Study.

Key skills are closely linked to an enquiry-based approach to learning, which is what this syllabus promotes.

The key skills that are required to be developed in Religious Education in order that pupils make progress are identified as follows:

1. Identify questions

This covers identifying questions and defining enquiries, using a range of methods, media and sources. It includes the skill of investigation.

2. Plan and carry out enquiries

This includes carrying out and developing enquiries by gathering, comparing, interpreting

and analysing a range of information, ideas and viewpoints.

3. Present and explain findings

This involves expressing and explaining ideas and feelings, suggesting interpretations of findings and analysing the range of information.

4. Empathise and reflect

This involves using empathy, critical thought and reflection to consider their learning and how they feel about it.

5. Evaluate

This involves evaluating their learning and considering how it might apply to their own lives.

The following table exemplifies these skills which are central for learning in Religious Education.

Teachers should plan to enable pupils to make progress with these skills as appropriate throughout all key stages.



SKILLS FOR LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Examples of Progression from 5-16:

PUPILS WILL BE INCREASINGLY ABLE TO:

INVESTIGATION – in RE this includes:

- asking relevant questions;
- knowing how to use different types of sources as a way of gathering information;
- knowing what may constitute evidence for understanding religions.

- ask increasingly deep and complex questions about religion;
- use a widening range of sources to pursue answers;
- focus on selecting and understanding relevant sources to deal with religious and spiritual questions with increasing insight and sensitivity;
- evaluate a range of responses to the questions and issues they study.

EXPRESSION – in RE this includes:

- the ability to explain concepts, rituals and practices;
- the ability to identify and articulate matters of deep conviction and concern, and to respond to religious issues through a variety of media.

- explain what words and actions might mean to believers;
- articulate their own reactions and ideas about religious questions and practices;
- clarify and analyse with growing confidence aspects of religion which they find valuable or interesting or negative;
- explain in words and other ways their own responses to matters of deep conviction.

INTERPRETATION – in RE this includes:

- the ability to draw meaning from artefacts, works of art, poetry and symbolism;
- the ability to suggest meanings of religious texts.

- say what an object means, or explain a symbol;
- use figures of speech or metaphors to speak creatively about religious ideas;
- understand increasingly the diverse ways in which religious and spiritual experience can be interpreted;
- clarify and express the role of interpretation in religion and life.



REFLECTION – in RE this includes:

- the ability to reflect on feelings, relationships, experience, ultimate questions, beliefs and practices;
- the ability to use stillness, mental and physical, to think with clarity and care about significant events, emotions and atmospheres.

- describe how action and atmosphere make them feel;
- experience the use of silence and thoughtfulness in religion and in life;
- take increasing account of the meanings of experience and discern the depth of questions religion addresses;
- respond sensitively and with insight to religious and spiritual phenomena and their meanings.

EMPATHY – in RE this includes:

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

- view with sensitivity how others respond to their actions, words or behaviour;
- connect their feelings, both positive and negative, with those of others, including those in religious stories and contexts;
- imagine with growing awareness how they would feel in a different situation from their own;
- identify thoughtfully with other people from a range of communities and stances for life.

APPLICATION – in RE this includes:

- making the association between religions and individual, community, national and international life;
- identifying key religious values and their interplay with secular ones.

- recognise religious materials and take note of their details and style;
- see links and simple connections between aspects of religions;
- make increasingly subtle and complex links between religious material and their own ideas;
- apply learning from one religious context to new contexts with growing awareness and clarity;
- synthesise their learning from different religious sources and their own ideas.





DISCERNMENT – in RE this includes:

- explaining the significance of aspects of religious belief and practice;
- developing insight into people, motives, actions and consequences;
- seeing clearly for themselves how individuals might learn from the religions they study.

- experience the awe and wonder of the natural world and of human relations;
- be willing to look beyond the surface at underlying ideas and questions;
- weigh up with insight the value religious believers find in their faith, relating it to their own experience;
- discern with clarity, respect and thoughtfulness the impact (positive and negative) of religious and secular ways of living.

ANALYSIS – in RE this includes:

- distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact;
- distinguishing between the features of different religions.

- see what kinds of reasons are given to explain religious aspects of life;
- join in discussion about issues arising from the study of religion;
- use reasons, facts, opinions, examples and experience to justify or question a view of a religious issue;
- analyse the religious views encountered with fairness, balance, empathy and critical rigour.

SYNTHESIS – in RE this includes:

- linking significant features of religion together in a coherent pattern;
- connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole.

- notice similarities between stories and practices from religions;
- use appropriate vocabulary to describe a range of religious practice and teaching;
- make links between different aspects of one religion, or similar and contrasting aspects of two or more religions;
- explain clearly the relationships, similarities and differences between a range of religious arguments, ideas, views and teachings.



EVALUATION – in RE this includes:

- the ability to debate issues of religious significance with reference to evidence and argument;
 - weighing up the respective claims of self-interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience.
- talk about what makes people choose religious ways of life;
 - describe how religious people show the importance of symbols, key figures, texts or stories;
 - weigh up with fairness and balance the value they see in a range of religious practices;
 - evaluate skilfully some religious responses to moral issues, and their own responses.

The development of these skills is not, of course, exclusive to RE. Common ground may be found with other curriculum areas, particularly with Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship Education.



Personal Learning and Thinking Skills Applied to Religious Education

Religious Education makes a key contribution to the personal learning and thinking skills which children and young people need from their education. Teachers should ensure that experiences and tasks in Religious Education address these skills throughout the key stages. The table below exemplifies some of the ways to help develop and apply these skills for 4-16 year olds.

The personal learning and thinking skills

Some practical and content specific examples of ways in which pupils develop and apply these skills in RE:

Independent enquirers

Focus:

Learners process and evaluate information in their investigations, planning what to do and how to go about it. They take informed and well-reasoned decisions, recognising that others have different beliefs and attitudes.

Learners will:

- identify questions to answer and problems to resolve, plan and carry out research, appreciating the consequences of decisions;
- explore issues, events or problems from different perspectives, analyse and evaluate information, judging its relevance and value;
- consider the influence of circumstances, beliefs and feelings on decisions and events;
- support conclusions, using reasoned arguments and evidence.

- Pupils role play appropriate behaviour and responses to scenarios connected to good and bad, religious and spiritual choices.
- Pupils plan some questions of their own to ask when they go on a faith visit or receive a faith visitor.
- Pupils plan to find out for themselves what religious belief is like in their neighbourhood. Every pupil takes two adults other than teachers through a questionnaire. They make a database of their responses.
- Pupils organise a discussion or debate about whether all religions and beliefs should be taught in school RE, collecting ideas from members of different religions represented in the school (or views of three different religions). They use atheist ideas as well.
- Pupils arrange six different arguments in order of strength to respond to the idea that when we're dead, that's the end of us.
- Pupils visit a hospital and interview a range of staff about how religion and belief affects areas such as catering, nursing or counselling.





The personal learning and thinking skills

Some practical and content specific examples of ways in which pupils develop and apply these skills in RE:

Creative thinkers

Focus:

Learners think creatively by generating and exploring ideas, making original connections. They try different ways to tackle a problem, working with others to find imaginative solutions and outcomes that are of value.

Learners will:

- generate ideas and explore possibilities;
- ask questions to extend their thinking;
- connect their own and others' ideas and experiences in inventive ways;
- question their own and others' assumptions;
- try out alternatives or new solutions and follow ideas through;
- adapt ideas as circumstances change.

- Pupils make music to express emotions felt by characters in a religious story.
- Pupils create a logo for RE, to show how their learning helps them to be respectful.
- Pupils devise a leaflet, a poster or a toy that helps younger children to explore an aspect of a religion.
- Pupils are given the task of designing a space in school for worship or quiet reflection suitable for members of any religious tradition or none. Older pupils work on two different designs, one that has different areas for different religions and beliefs, one that anyone could use.
- Pupils working on creation narratives from holy books spend time on the question: 'If you were creating a new world, what would you change and what would you leave the same?' The question enables creative exploration of good and evil.
- Pupils hear three pieces of spiritual / religious music and create poetry or a sequence of dance movements that expresses the same emotions or ideas as they hear in the music. This uses different media to explore spirituality.





Team workers

Focus:

Learners work confidently with others, adapting to different contexts and taking responsibility for their own part. They listen to, and take account of, different views. They form collaborative relationships, resolving issues to reach agreed outcomes.

Learners will:

- collaborate with others to work towards common goals;
 - reach agreements, managing discussions to achieve results;
 - adapt behaviour to suit different roles and situations, including leadership roles;
 - show fairness and consideration to others;
 - take responsibility, showing confidence in themselves and their contribution;
 - provide constructive support and feedback to others.
- Pupils work together in paired talk or small groups to sequence pictures that tell a story or steps in an argument.
 - To illustrate the concept of community strength, pupils co-operate to build bridges out of straws and paper. The idea of a bridge as a metaphor for the Buddhist Sangha is explored.
 - A group of seven pupils plan a shared investigation into a religion they have not studied before. Each one takes one of Smart's 'dimensions' of religion and produces a piece of work about it to share round the group.
 - Pupils plan a role play in which members of different faith groups work together in an anti-poverty charity. Each must be assertive about their own faith and respectful of others.
 - Pupils contribute to an online forum debate to decide whether they should invite a religious visitor into school rather than visit their place of worship.

"I like RE because it helps me find out about other cultures and religions. I have also found out how other people live and what they do in their religion. I have also learned to be happy with what I've got because there are a lot more people in the world less fortunate than me."

Madeline

Age 13





The personal learning and thinking skills

Some practical and content specific examples of ways in which pupils develop and apply these skills in RE:

Reflective learners

Focus:

Learners evaluate their strengths and limitations, setting themselves realistic goals with criteria for success. They monitor their own performance and progress, inviting feedback from others and making changes to further their learning.

Learners will:

- assess themselves and others, identifying opportunities and achievements;
- set goals with success criteria for their development and work;
- review progress, acting on the outcomes;
- invite feedback and deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism;
- evaluate experiences and learning to inform future progress;
- communicate their learning in relevant ways for different audiences.

- Pupils consider and share their thoughts about how they might have felt if they were characters in a religious story.
- Pupils make a comparison between the Jewish festival of Sukkot, Christian celebrations of harvest and a contemporary secular festival (e.g. Glastonbury, Red Nose Day).
- Pupils discuss among themselves the best ranking for some factors that explain religious phenomena.
- They peer-review their work to see if the similarities and differences others have spotted are shared. They reflect on the significance of celebration in human life.
- Following a module of work on sanctity of life issues, pupils discuss whether they have used methods from sociology, theology, political studies and philosophy equally. They finalise their work for a balanced approach.
- Pupils evaluate the personal and learning impact of visiting a mosque and a church: What is the impact of sacred space on my ideas?
- Pupils compare their own piece of extended writing about the value of a religious pilgrimage with a model answer and a set of success criteria. They set themselves targets to improve their next piece of work.





Self managers

Focus:

Learners organise themselves, showing personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise, with a commitment to learning and self-improvement. They actively embrace change, responding positively to new priorities, coping with challenges and looking for opportunities.

Learners will:

- seek out challenges or new responsibilities and show flexibility when priorities change;
- work towards goals, showing initiative, commitment and perseverance;
- organise time and resources, prioritising actions;
- anticipate, take and manage risks;
- deal with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands;
- respond positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed;
- manage their emotions, and build and maintain relationships.

- Pupils work with talk partners to decide what they will need to do when preparing for a visit to a special place.
- Pupils use pictures and other visual learning stimuli to develop their own lines of enquiry into worship, celebration or sacred space.
- Pupils are invited to plan their own learning with regard to Christian and Hindu beliefs about life after death. The teacher facilitates but doesn't intervene. Research skills of investigation and enquiry are built up and assessed.
- Pupils are given a choice of four religious charities to study in an RE / Citizenship project on global development. With structured support, they each choose a charity, three main questions, two sources of information and produce one piece of work as an outcome, in a media of their choice.
- Emotional and spiritual literacy is developed through guided reflection in RE. Pupils are given several choices of how to follow up the session and freedom to follow the path they choose.

"I particularly enjoy going on visits to places of worship. It makes the religion feel real and it is good to meet people from those communities. We may believe different things but are all the same!"

Emily-Jayne

Age 14





Photograph reproduced with kind permission of Patel Sumaj, Northampton.

The personal learning and thinking skills

Some practical and content specific examples of ways in which pupils develop and apply these skills in RE:

Effective participators

Focus:

Learners actively engage with issues that affect them and those around them. They play a full part in the life of their school, college, workplace or wider community by taking responsible action to bring improvements for others as well as themselves.

Learners will:

- discuss issues of concern, seeking resolution where needed;
- present a persuasive case for action;
- propose practical ways forward, breaking these down into manageable steps;
- identify improvements that would benefit others as well as themselves;
- try to influence others, negotiating and balancing diverse views to reach workable solutions;
- act as an advocate for views and beliefs that may differ from their own.

- Pupils are increasingly willing to share ideas and beliefs of their own in small groups or circle time.
- Pupils choose a charity for which to fundraise after learning about how different charities help others.
- Pupils hold group discussions: Which religion should we follow if we want to save the planet? Each group member tries to persuade others whilst encouraging those with opposing views to participate.
- After learning about Christian art, pupils work together in pairs to identify and create works of art for the local Church they have visited, making concepts like 'Incarnation' 'Trinity' and 'Fellowship' the focus of their work.
- Using the strategy called 'Reflection Alley', pupils advise each other on moral and religious dilemmas, expressing arguments for views they don't actually believe in themselves.
- Pupils write a letter to the planning department of their local authority arguing the case for the provision of a place of worship for a religion or belief which is different from their own.

"RE allows us to explore our own beliefs and those of others."

Christopher

Age 11

