

# The Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2018- 2023

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## Foreword

We are delighted to introduce the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Religious Education Syllabus for 2018 - 2023.

In Reading we are privileged to work in conjunction with the five other local authorities to produce a single RE syllabus within the County. This helps us provide continuity for students who often move to local secondary schools within the county, across local unitary authority borders. We are most grateful to the Reading SACRE Adviser, David Rees, and to Jan Lever, our lead RE Advisor and the architect of this syllabus, for her expert guidance overseeing this process and for fostering the SACRE Hub project which has enabled us to work more effectively together, along with the other authorities' RE advisors.

In our multicultural society, Religious Education is a vitally important element of our children's education. It locates children in our society and enables them to relate to the traditions and beliefs of others, while developing their religious literacy and discernment, as well as their own belief system. As an academic subject, it develops the critical thinking and understanding that are necessary in modern society with respect to faith and belief.

This revised and succinct version of the agreed syllabus is designed to assist teachers in understanding their statutory responsibilities better, these being laid out clearly in Key Stage sections. It is in essence a revision and development of the previous syllabus.

To this end, the document has been restricted to the statutory elements, with the appendices of the previous syllabus safely available online for reference. In due course, we shall provide additional guidance and support material, to be available online.

We acknowledge the assistance of many leaders of faith and belief communities, alongside the efforts of SACRE members and teachers, in revising this syllabus and making it clearer and more focused and compact than its predecessor.

We hope that this revised syllabus will assist our hard-working RE teachers to continue providing interesting, enjoyable and challenging lessons of high quality over the coming years.

The Reading SACRE is aware of the issues facing RE in the curriculum, but we have not diminished our determination to support our Borough's teachers with training and CPD through the Reading SACRE RE Network meetings, as well as the Pan-Berkshire Hub of which we are a full member, in order to encourage and facilitate the best RE teaching possible. This revised syllabus reflects that determination.

**Rabbi Zvi Solomons**  
Chair of the Reading SACRE, 2010 – 2018

**Michael Freeman**  
Current Chair of the Reading SACRE

## Introduction

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE AGREED SYLLABUS?

The locally agreed syllabus forms the foundation of Religious Education in maintained schools without a religious character and maintained voluntary controlled schools. Academies without a religious character must follow an Agreed Syllabus for RE, though they are free to choose which Agreed Syllabus they follow.

The agreed syllabus should satisfy two key requirements:

- the law (as set out in the Education Act 1996)
- the aims of RE as defined by the local Agreed Syllabus Conference.

At teachers' requests, the statutory requirements of the Pan-Berkshire agreed syllabus are contained in this succinct document.

Further guidance on the Key Questions for each religion/ belief system required to be studied, implementation and delivery is offered in accompanying online support documents.

## ALL schools have the statutory obligation to teach Religious Education to ALL pupils.

**RE should be taught to all pupils in full-time education in schools, except for those withdrawn at the written request of their parents.**

(REFERENCE 'EDUCATION ACT' 1944, 'RE IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS: NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE 2010, DCSF).

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND AIM OF RE IN SCHOOLS?

The purpose of RE is to promote religious literacy. Religious literacy requires pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews and to use that knowledge to engage in informed and balanced conversations about religions and beliefs. In addition to learning about religions and worldviews, Religious Education offers students the chance to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally and to reflect on their own beliefs, being able to be discerning about the many attitudes and opinions they will encounter.

The non-statutory 2013 National Curriculum Framework for RE states that pupils should:

- Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.

To achieve these aims, Religious Education provokes challenging questions about meaning, purpose, beliefs about God, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for life in the modern world, and should enable them to flourish as citizens in a pluralistic, global society.

### HOW WILL THIS SYLLABUS HELP YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS BERKSHIRE TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS?

The Pan-Berkshire syllabus (2018-2023) is based on similar "big questions" to those found in the 2012-17 version of the syllabus; the links between the three strands of "Belonging, Believing and Behaving" are made more explicit and there are now expected outcomes to replace the Attainment Levels. The links between "learning about" and "learning from" are made more explicit and integrated into the expected outcomes: the questions and expected outcomes combine the need to demonstrate knowledge with an understanding of the impact, necessitating the deployment of specific skills. It is intended that progression in learning will be assessed by the school and will probably reflect Bloom's or SOLO Taxonomy.

The supplementary guidance material that supports this syllabus will explore this further and give information regarding these suggested taxonomies.

This syllabus builds on the previous one by demanding that a slightly wider range of religions and belief systems are taught as statutory requirements, bringing Islam into the Primary Phase and specifying the study of a non-religious worldview, probably Humanism, in Key Stage 3. However, more flexibility is also built in. Schools are free to add additional religions and belief systems as relevant to their school community.

**WHICH RELIGIONS/BELIEF SYSTEMS ARE STATUTORY IN THIS SYLLABUS?**

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS, ages 3-4)

RE is only statutory for EYFS children registered on the school roll i.e. from their Reception Year, not for those in nursery classes in maintained schools or in other early years settings. Where it is statutory, the RE should be aligned to the most recent EYFS framework.

**During the Reception Year** (ages 4-5), pupils **MUST** encounter Christianity **PLUS** at least one other religion from Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

It is expected that learning will be experiential and thematic during the EYFS.

PRIMARY PHASE (Years 1- 6, ages 5-11)

By the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6, age 11), pupils **MUST** have:

studied Christianity in every year group **PLUS** Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, by exploring the Key Questions for the relevant Key Stage. They must have achieved the expected outcomes identified in the syllabus.

LOWER SECONDARY PHASE (Years 7- 9, ages 12-14)

By the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9, age 14), pupils **MUST** have:

studied Christianity in every year group **PLUS** Buddhism, Islam and a non-religious worldview e.g. Humanism, by exploring the Key Questions for Key Stage 3. They must have achieved the expected outcomes identified in the syllabus.

*These requirements apply to ALL pupils in Key Stage 3, even those undertaking early-entry GCSE courses starting in Year 9.*

UPPER SECONDARY PHASE (Years 10-13, ages 15-18)

By the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11, age 16), pupils **MUST** have:

studied Christianity and at least one other religion or non-religious worldview.

All pupils must receive Religious Education and should follow an externally accredited course for Religious Studies e.g. GCSE, or an alternative, well-structured and challenging programme of Religious Education. Schools are encouraged to facilitate examination entry for as many students as possible.

POST-16

All students **MUST** receive Religious Education. Students should have the opportunity to follow a course, or modules, which lead to external accreditation e.g. A level Religious Studies. Suggested modules are set out in the supporting guidance material.

Reception Year and Key Stage 1 (ages 4-7)

**Reception Year**

**Which religions?**

Children’s Reception Year (age 5), is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. During this year they should encounter Christianity and at least one of the other principal religions required by the end of Key Stage 2, and their learning should be aligned to the most recent national EYFS Framework. Learning is expected to be experiential and thematic.

**Key Stage 1**

**Which religions?**

Christianity plus one other religion from Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism, must be studied in each year group in Key Stage 1. Whole Primary Phase planning must ensure coverage of the required religions by the end of Key Stage 2.

**Expected Outcomes for Key Stage 1**

By the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2, age 7), pupils are expected to achieve the following **four outcomes** in their study of **Christianity** and to achieve **at least two** of these outcomes for each of the other religion/s studied, mindful of the holistic learning needed by the end of the Primary Phase.

Key Stage 1 Expected outcomes - Enquiry and Impact	
Exp.A	Recognise and give simple accounts of the core beliefs.
Exp.B	Retell a range of religious stories and explain how they link to the core beliefs and practices.
Exp.C	Describe some festivals, celebrations and practices and say how they reflect the core beliefs.
Exp.D	Recognise the roles of religious leaders and sacred texts.

These outcomes should be achieved through exploration of the following **Key Questions**:

Key Stage 1 - Key Questions		
Qu.1	How do some religions demonstrate that everyone is special?	(Believing/Belonging)
Qu.2	Why are religious celebrations important to some people but not to others?	(Believing/Belonging/Behaving)
Qu.3	Does everyone believe the same things about God?	(Believing)
Qu.4	Why do symbols and stories play important roles in religions?	(Believing/Belonging/Behaving)
Qu.5	Why do some people follow religious leaders and teachings?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.6	How do some people’s religious beliefs encourage them to care for the world?	(Believing/Behaving)

**Which questions and how many at Key Stage 1?**

**All 6** Key Questions must be explored in the study of Christianity by the end of Key Stage 1. For each of the other religions studied, **at least two** of the questions should be addressed.

*These questions can be adapted, combined or wording changed providing that the content and strands are retained and the outcomes are achieved.*

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTES (NOT statutory)

**Primary Phase (Key Stage 1)**

- It is recommended that just ONE of the mandatory religions is studied alongside Christianity in each year group (Reception to Year 6) during the Primary Phase.
- When the Primary Phase is split across schools, schools should liaise to ensure the full range of religions is covered and progression and continuity are considered.
- Schools should also liaise with the secondary schools they feed to ensure continuity and progression.
- Sufficient teaching time, training and resources should be allocated to enable effective leadership and delivery.

**Minimum teaching time:**

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

Other principal religions and worldviews of local significance e.g. the Baha’i Faith, may be studied in addition to the required statutory religions, at the school’s discretion.

- The underpinning themes of Believing, Behaving and Belonging need to be integrated in RE planning.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6, ages 8-11)

**Which religions?**

**Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism by the end of Key Stage 2**

Christianity plus one other religion from Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism, must be studied in each year group, ensuring coverage of the required religions by the end of Key Stage2, and building on the learning achieved in Key Stage 1.

**Expected Outcomes for Lower and Upper Key Stage 2**

By the end of LOWER Key Stage 2 (Year 4, age 9), pupils are expected achieve the following **four outcomes** in their study of **Christianity** and to achieve **at least two** of these outcomes for each of the other religion/s studied. The choice of outcomes needs to ensure as holistic an understanding of each of the religions studied (especially the core beliefs and their application) as possible and take account of progress through the whole key stage.

Lower Key Stage 2 Expected outcomes - Enquiry and Impact	
Exp.A	Explain the significance of religious leaders and sacred texts.
Exp.B	Describe a range of ways that believers express their core beliefs and make the links between belief and expression.
Exp.C	Identify how core beliefs can guide lifestyle choices.
Exp.D	Recognise how religious identity can be shaped by family, community and practice.

By the end of UPPER Key Stage 2 (Year 6, age 11) pupils are expected to achieve the following **four outcomes** in their study of **Christianity** and to achieve **at least two** of these outcomes for each of the other religion/s studied. The choice of outcomes needs to ensure as holistic an understanding of each of the religions studied (especially the core beliefs and their application) as possible and take account of progress through the whole key stage.

Upper Key Stage 2 Expected outcomes - Enquiry and Impact	
Exp.A	Describe and explain what motivates and inspires believers and how this can be reflected in actions/practice.
Exp.B	Explain and demonstrate how and why believers show courage and commitment.
Exp.C	Explain how beliefs, practices and community can support or determine responses to matters of life and death.
Exp.D	Give examples of how core beliefs can be interpreted in different ways leading to diverse expression and behaviour.

These outcomes should be achieved through exploration of the following **Key Questions**:

Key Stage 2 - Key Questions		
Qu.1	To what extent does participating in worship and/or prayer generate a sense of belonging?	(Believing/Belonging)
Qu.2	Do Rites of Passage always help a believer to feel connected to God and/or community?	(Believing/Belonging/Behaving)
Qu.3	How can music and the arts help express and communicate religious beliefs?	(Believing/Belonging)
Qu.4	To what extent do religious beliefs influence and encourage 'good' behaviour?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.5	How do religious leaders and sacred texts contribute to believers' understanding of their faith?	(Believing)
Qu.6	How well does faith help people cope with matters of life and death?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.7	What difference might it make to believe in God as Creator?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.8	How might beliefs and community shape a person's identity?	(Believing/Belonging)

**Which questions and how many at Key Stage 2?**

**All 8** Key Questions must be explored in the study of Christianity across Key Stage 2.

For the other principal religions studied in the Primary Phase (Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) it will not be possible to explore all 8 Key Questions for each religion. Therefore, schools are asked to select Key Questions (**at least 2** for each religion) to enable depth of study into each religion and breadth of study across the religions studied in the Primary Phase, building on the foundation learning achieved in Key Stage 1.

*These questions can be adapted, combined or wording changed providing that the content and strands are retained and the outcomes are achieved.*

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTES (NOT statutory)

**Primary Phase**

- It is recommended that just ONE of the mandatory religions is studied alongside Christianity in each year group (Reception to Year 6) during the Primary Phase.
- When the Primary Phase is split across schools, schools should liaise to ensure the full range of religions is covered and progression and continuity are considered.
- Schools should also liaise with the secondary schools they feed to ensure transition, continuity and progression.
- Sufficient teaching time, training and resources should be allocated to enable effective leadership and delivery.

**Minimum teaching time:**

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

- Other principal religions and worldviews of local significance e.g. the Baha'i Faith, may be studied in addition to the required statutory religions, at the school's discretion.
- The underpinning themes of Believing, Behaving and Belonging need to be integrated in RE planning.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE.



**Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9, ages 12-14)**

**Which religions/belief systems?**

**Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and a non-religious worldview e.g. Humanism, by the end of Key Stage 3**

Christianity plus one other religion/belief system from Buddhism, Islam and a non-religious worldview e.g. Humanism, must be studied in each year group, ensuring coverage of the required religions/worldview by the end of Key Stage3, building on the Primary Phase learning.

Additional religions e.g. the Baha'i Faith, may be included to allow a range of beliefs to be studied in relation to a specific key question.

Other non-religious worldviews may also be included and may include Agnostic, Atheist, Freethinker, Humanist, Pagan, Materialist, Rationalist, Secularist, Skeptic.

Guidance and support materials will be available on line.

**Expected Outcomes for Key Stage 3**

By the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9, age 14), pupils are expected to achieve the following **four** outcomes in relation to **Christianity** and to achieve **at least two** of these outcomes for each of the other religions/belief systems studied.

Over the course of this phase pupils must acquire as holistic an understanding of all the religions/belief systems studied (especially the core beliefs and their application) as possible.

*These requirements apply to ALL pupils in Key Stage 3, even those undertaking early-entry GCSE courses starting in Year 9.*

Key Stage 3 Expected Outcomes - Enquiry and Impact	
Exp.A	Identify the nature of spiritual experience and its influence on believers' lives, sense of purpose and religious practice.
Exp.B	Evaluate how far concepts of truth, right and wrong generated by different belief systems, are used to justify behaviour.
Exp.C	Explain and evaluate how beliefs about God determine responses to personal, social and global issues.
Exp.D	Evaluate the 'sacredness' of texts and the impact of divergent interpretations.

These outcomes should be achieved through exploration of the following **Key Questions**:

Key Stage 3 - Key Questions		
Qu.1	Is there more than one way to be spiritual?	(Believing/Behaving/Belonging)
Qu.2	How far does a person's understanding of God influence their sense of purpose?	(Believing/Belonging/Behaving)
Qu.3	How might beliefs shape concepts of truth, right and wrong?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.4	In what ways do science, belief and religion interact and what difference might this make?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.5	To what extent should people from different belief systems manage their differences and co-operate for the common good?	(Believing/Behaving/Belonging)
Qu.6	To what extent do religious or non-religious beliefs affect personal relationships?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.7	Why might it matter that sacred texts are often open to interpretation?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.8	How might belief affect people's responses towards social and global issues?	(Believing/Behaving)

**Which questions and how many at Key Stage 3?**

**All 8** Key Questions must be explored in the study of Christianity across Key Stage 3.

For the other principal religions/ belief systems studied in Key Stage3, (Buddhism, Islam and Humanism/ non-religious world-views) it will not be possible to explore all 8 Key Questions for each. Therefore, schools are asked to select Key Questions (**at least 2** for each religion/belief system) to enable depth of study into each and breadth of study across them in the Key Stage 3.

*These questions can be adapted, combined or wording changed providing that the content and strands are retained and the outcomes are achieved.*

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTES (NOT statutory)

**Secondary Phase**

- Schools should liaise with their feeder schools to ensure progression and continuity through the transition into the Secondary Phase.
- Sufficient teaching time, training and resources, should be allocated to enable effective leadership and delivery

**Minimum** teaching time:

Key Stage 3: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 4: 40 hours per year

Post-16: 10 hours per year

- Other principal religions and worldviews of local significance e.g. the Baha'i Faith, may also be studied at the school's discretion
- Schools are encouraged to facilitate external-examination entry for as many pupils as possible.
- The underpinning themes of Believing, Behaving and Belonging need to be integrated in RE planning.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE before they reach 18.



### Rationale and Acknowledgements

Much thought, consideration and time has been devoted to this 2018-23 agreed syllabus for Religious Education, in order to bring clarity to the requirements and expectations of RE, whilst ensuring the excellent RE practice in schools across Berkshire is maintained and not disrupted by a new syllabus.

All 6 Berkshire SACREs (Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) worked together to produce the syllabus, using the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub as the conduit for consultation, and invited consultation with teachers and faith and belief communities to ensure the revisions made move RE in Berkshire forward.

Mindful of the ever-present pressures competing for teacher-time, the statutory aspects of the syllabus have been condensed and collated on just a few pages, each Key Stage being seen in its own right whilst always understanding that planning should be undertaken across the Key Stages to ensure as comprehensive and holistic an RE learning journey as possible for every pupil.

The aims are:

- to clarify and make concise the statutory aspects of the syllabus,
- to retain the enquiry-approach,
- to simplify the layout of the Key Questions, making the wording more 'open' and encompassing both Attainment Targets 1 and 2 (learning about and from religion and belief systems) within each question,
- to keep the underpinning Believing, Belonging, Behaving structure to ensure the focus on core beliefs and their application
- to make the expectation as to what is taught in the given RE curriculum time as realistic as possible
- to set out the expected learning outcomes for each Key Stage to enable the planning process to start with clear aims for pupils' RE learning

Thanks go to all those who have dedicated time and expertise to the revision of the Pan-Berkshire agreed syllabus for RE, including:

All 6 SACREs, chairs, vice-chairs, clerks, members and advisers

Headteachers and teachers of RE

Leaders and members of faith and belief communities

