

Religious Education (RE)

What are the aims and purpose of this subject?

This document focuses on the designs and delivery of the curriculum at Oswald Road Primary School (ORPS). However, it is first important to outline the core aims and purposes of the subject. The purpose of Religious Education (RE) is set out in the agreed syllabus as follows:

- *RE contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.*
- *In RE they learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.*
- *They learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.*
- *Teaching therefore should equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.*
- *It should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society, with its diverse religions and worldviews.*
- *Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They should learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.*

This is then summarised in the principal aim, which can be used by teachers on a day-to-day basis, when planning or considering RE:

"The principal aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own."

The principal aim of RE is elaborated into the 'threefold aim', which outlines what pupils should be expected to achieve, and all teaching can be considered to contribute towards these goals.

The curriculum for RE is designed to ensure that all pupils:

1. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- *describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals*
- *identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews*
- *appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.*

2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- *explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities*
- *express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues*
- *appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion.*

3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- *find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively*
- *enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all*
- *articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.*

RE is a vital subject for children at ORPS. As stated in the school's values, "As a school, we would like the children to know and value their place in not only the school and local community, but also nationally and globally and we celebrate the diversity of our local area."

RE is a hugely important tool to help children learn this. It allows them to understand the idea of community, particularly in how that community differs - both through the worldviews and faiths of their own self, family, and community, but also the worldviews and faith of others who do not share their own view.

It also provides a space for their growing independence, as embedded within RE are the tools of philosophy - thinking critically, analysing, reasoning, discussing and debating - which affords children the opportunity to develop their own viewpoint within the context of the views of the others. The teaching should allow them to reflect on their own ideas and ways of living so that pupils can make sense of religion, exploring the big questions about life and how to live.

RE ties in neatly with the academic skills taught at ORPS - reading for understanding and comprehension, writing for clarity and purpose, examining sources sensitively - even elements of maths and science fit into religious learning. Finally, RE reflects the Rights Respecting ethos that lies at the heart of ORPS' vision. Through learning about the religions and worldviews in both their immediate community and the wider community of the United Kingdom, children can build up the vital skills of tolerance, respect and understanding. This results in not just an acknowledgement of the diversity found in our school, but a celebration of it.

What are the National Curriculum requirements for this subject?

Religious Education occupies a unique place within the National Curriculum, as it is not mandated as part of the core curriculum along with other curriculum subjects. Schools must provide RE but parents can ask for their children to be taken out of the whole lesson or part of it (however they must demonstrate that they can provide their own religious education for the time the children are taken out, as RE is a legal requirement). The subject is not detailed on a national level, but rather at the local level - local authorities (LAs) are responsible for deciding the RE syllabus, but faith schools and academies can set their own.

LAs have much freedom to create their own syllabus, however legally it must “reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.” Each LA must establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE), which advises the LA on the syllabus and reviews it every five years.

The syllabus used by ORPS is a joint project of 5 SACREs, including Manchester SACRE. This is the agreed syllabus for Religious Education from 2022 to 2027. It is currently under review and due to be published in 2027, and ORPS will amend their approach if necessary after reviewing the new guidance.

Religions

The agreed syllabus requires that all pupils learn from Christianity in each key stage. In addition, pupils will learn from the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study. The minimum requirement as set out by age groups is as follows:

4–5s (Reception) - Children will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.

5–7s (Key Stage 1) - Christians and Muslims or Jewish people

7–11s (Key Stage 2) - Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people

This represents the minimum requirement. As a school, we have adjusted and widened to include learning about the faith and worldview of Sikhs, as this more fully reflects our diverse community.

Time for RE

The agreed syllabus states that, “In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus effectively, the expectation is that there is a minimum allocation of 5 percent of curriculum time for RE [...] based on the most recent national guidance.”

This is set out as follows:

4-5s - **36 hours of RE**, e.g. 50 minutes a week or some short sessions implemented through continuous provision

5-7s - **36 hours of tuition per year** e.g. an hour a week, or less than an hour a week plus a series of RE days

7-11s - **45 hours of tuition per year** e.g. an hour a week, or a series of RE days or weeks amounting to 45+ hours of RE

The syllabus makes clear that collective worship and school assembly time should be distinct from this 'curriculum time'.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The syllabus reminds us that RE is for all: every pupil can achieve and benefit from RE, including all pupils with SEND. RE is a statutory part of the core curriculum for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. The syllabus also notes that the planning of the syllabus in RE can be carefully tailored to the special needs of all pupils. There is a significant amount of freedom to adapt the curriculum for SEND pupils *within* RE, to ensure that all pupils have access *to* RE.

The curriculum at ORPS is designed such that children with SEND can achieve the goals set out in the threefold aim: - that they can know about and understand a wide range of religions and worldviews, express ideas about them, and gain and deploy skills to engage with them. Teachers deliver strategies that work for the individuals within their classrooms, but may include the use of digital recording over written; differentiated activities; or expanded, additional resources. Our most complex SEND children (pupils with an EHCP) may have 1:1 support, small groups or work in the SEND model. SEND children may receive an additional pre-teach session or short additional bursts of learning where further discussions are had to ensure the child can access the learning (such as a session on vocabulary for the unit).

This approach ensures that there is a high ambition in RE for all pupils, and the school does not offer disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND a reduced RE curriculum.

Some SEND children (SEND support pupils) need further careful consideration around what needs to be re-visited or recapped from previous linked units in more detail.

RE in EYFS

Religious Education is statutory for all pupils registered on the school roll. The statutory requirement for religious education, however, does not extend to Nursery classes in maintained schools. At ORPS, some learning on religious education may be incorporated into children's activities in order to help prepare children for their more structured learning at Reception, where children are required to follow the agreed syllabus.

Themes which lend themselves to RE work at Nursery include:

- Myself, My life, My Senses, My Special Things,
- People Special to Me, People Who help us,
- Friendship, Welcome, Belonging
- Special Places, Special Times
- Special Places, Special Times
- Special Books, Stories, The Natural World

At Reception, the agreed syllabus suggests, "The approach outlined for nursery will also serve reception class teachers, especially in the earlier months of the reception year." It then provides a suggestion of questions, outcomes and content that will ensure good provision for RE in Reception. Though non-statutory, the syllabus suggests that they should be read by all schools and settings to ensure that their provision is effective - "For teaching to be good quality the questions, learning outcomes and content need to be taught together."

At ORPS these suggestions are used in combination with learning from the 'Understanding the World' and 'Festivals' sections of the EYFS curriculum framework. In particular, festivals and visits are used as 'jumping-off points' to cover the prior learning needed for the Y1 RE curriculum.

RE at KS1 and KS2

A more detailed exploration of the curriculum and its underpinnings is explored in the sections below. However, it is firstly worth stating the overview given for KS1 and KS2 as set out in the agreed syllabus.

For KS1:

"Pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should use basic subject specific vocabulary. They should raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas."

For KS2:

"Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject specific vocabulary. They should be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils should learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views."

How is this subject's curriculum organised?

The topics of RE's agreed syllabus are split into three broad strands (which are linked to, but do not directly map onto, the threefold aim):

- Believing (Religious beliefs, teachings, sources; questions about meaning, purpose and truth)
- Expressing (Religious and spiritual forms of expression; questions about identity and diversity)
- Living (Religious practices and ways of living; questions about values and commitments)

Each topic is given a key question which is outlined at the beginning of the topic and is returned to at its end, for example, "L2.3 Why is Jesus inspiring to some people?". Each of these key questions are organised into one of the three strands, so, for example, key question L2.3 is organised into 'Believing'. Progression is achieved by pupils revisiting each of these strands repeatedly over their time at school, building on and developing their prior learning, whilst encountering new topics and ideas as they progress.

Each key question is linked to at least one religion. Some are determined by the nature of the key question (e.g. L2.3 above is directly linked to Christianity), although some are chosen by school to represent the broad range of beliefs and worldviews expressed by our community.

To ensure that a balanced curriculum is delivered, a long-term curriculum map assigns these questions, strands and religions from Year 1 to Year 6, as well as suggested themes for Nursery and Reception, for each of the six half terms over the year. Each of the key questions is accompanied with medium-term planning, which contains several suggested lessons and themes which build towards being able to answer the key question in a meaningful way.

In order to design a clear path of progression for learning in RE, the key questions have been further organised into threads. These threads are based around key themes of learning, for example 'Places of Worship' which contains the questions leading from the Foundation unit, 'Which places are special and why?' to the Year 6 unit 'Is it better to express your beliefs in art and architecture or in charity and generosity?'. These threads enable a clear view of the prior learning needed for each learning objective within the unit, and provide clear end-points that can be worked towards in order for further learning to follow in future units.

To deliver RE lessons, ORPS utilises an 'RE Day' in Years 1 through 6, where one key question is largely taught over one central RE Day (or two depending on the long-term planning). Each of these days is preceded the week before by a pre-teach session, which focuses on accessing and recalling prior learning, or introducing basic concepts and vocabulary in the case of an entirely new topic/thread. Each of the RE Days is also followed the week after by a post-teach lesson, which allows teachers to gauge pupils' learning and capture some of the outcomes for the unit by checking what key concepts and knowledge has been learnt; it also allows pupils an opportunity to reflect spiritually and apply their learning to their own lives.

Several lessons will be taught over the course of the RE Day, based on the medium-term planning, and always includes one written piece (though there is differentiation for SEND pupils) as well as a range of other activities to achieve the success criteria outlined in the plans.

Why is it organised like this?

The RE leadership within the school have designed the curriculum this way in order to ensure that the threefold aim is met. The division of the key questions into the three strands of Believing, Expressing, and Living practically allows breadth and balance to be easily built in across the RE curriculum by addressing each of the three strands across the key stage in the long-term planning. So, a student will always encounter each strand for at least one term every year.

The organisation of the curriculum into key questions allows for enquiry-based learning, which ties in well to the principal aim of RE – '*systematic enquiry into significant human questions*'. The curriculum as devised by SACRE is built almost entirely around two sets of end of key stage outcomes, which are highlighted in the school's RE progression map. The key questions are designed to enable children to achieve these end points (or in the case of Years 1, 3, 4 and 5, build up towards them).

The key questions appropriate to our school and context have been selected by the RE team. Each key question has a set of learning outcomes; the RE team have selected from these those that both link to the overall progression and that work towards achieving some aspect

of the end points. From here, content and planning has been chosen (e.g. appropriate religion, lessons covered etc.) to address each of these learning outcomes. This is then provided to teachers in the form of a unit overview, which enables the teachers to focus on adapting the teaching and learning to fit their individual class and children.

These learning outcomes have been used to sequence a clear progression of learning, so that each unit builds on the knowledge, skills and attitudes learnt previously. The progression threads provide clearly defined end points which can be built towards over a pupil's education. From these threads, overview documents have been produced for teachers so that they can see, for each unit, the prior learning required and the final end points to work towards, along with suggestions of planning and key vocabulary. This ensures that high quality teaching is delivered which closely matches the intended sequence of learning.

At ORPS we use the given key questions set out in the agreed syllabus, adjusting and modifying them where appropriate to fit our context. For example, a strain of Humanist thinking is introduced in Year 3 and developed throughout KS2, which reflects the beliefs of a number of our pupils. Some key questions are split over two terms, as the agreed syllabus recommends that fewer key questions should be explored in more depth to allow for greater development of skills (as opposed to rote knowledge).

The pre-teach lessons not only connect to prior learning, but also provide an opportunity to address any potential gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills – allowing the teacher an opportunity to cover these in the coming RE Day. The post-teach sessions then enable the evaluation of pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes against the success criteria outlined in the overview documents.

The religions learned are spread out over the year groups to ensure both the minimum statutory requirements and the diversity of beliefs held by the ORPS community are fully covered. Cross-curricular links are also made wherever possible, for example, the Year 6 key question, "U2.5 Is it better to express your beliefs in arts and architecture or in charity and generosity?" is given a focus of Islamic art, which both ties into the Year 6 history topic on ancient Islamic civilisation, and represents an important focus of study for those of the Islamic faith within the ORPS community.

The Oswald Road approach to RE is to deliver high quality 'RE Days', which also have associated pre-teach days and post-teach days (apart from the use of continuous provision within EYFS); the six days and their associated pre- and post-teach days are divided over the six half-terms of the year. The purpose of this is partially to ensure curriculum coverage. As is the case for all primary schools, there is a continuing challenge to timetable all parts of the national curriculum where time is at a high premium. The use of RE Days ensures that each of the key questions is covered within the year, so children have the full suite of knowledge and skills needed to progress.

The focus on these days also creates an excitement around RE – children look forward to the days where they are able to focus on and engage exclusively with RE. The days are enriched, where possible through the use of visitors, trips and other enrichment events, for example the Year 3 annual visit to the 'Easter Experience', a local event which gives children an excellent foundation for studying Easter within a religious context. Each year group has a visit to a place of religious worship, and all major religions taught within KS1 and 2 have an associated trip.

How are knowledge, understanding and skills developed in this subject?

This is covered in more detail in the long term curriculum map, subject threads, RE progression document, as well as the unit overviews and medium-term planning for each key question.

What does this subject look like...

in lessons?	in books?	in the environment?
Each RE day is preceded by a pre-teach lesson the week before. This will help children to know/remember that this is RE, and focus on engaging with prior learning. There will then be, either in this pre-teach or at the beginning of the RE Day, an opportunity to address any gaps, key concepts, or vocabulary that are necessary for this unit. RE Days will then begin proper with an outlining of the key question. An opportunity is given to view the key vocabulary for the topic, as well as ask questions about it and again revisit prior learning. At the end of the day, or in the post-teach, this is returned to, and a form of the key question is used to round off the topic as a plenary and assessment. Throughout the day, children will often be seen taking part in collaborative work as part of a team, as well as chances to work independently or in pairs. Discussions are a key part of RE teaching, and structured debates and discussions will	Each of the lessons throughout the day will have a specific aim that builds towards the final outcomes of the key question. Each day will contain usually one to two pieces of writing - this can take the form of creative writing or a written response to a marking question. In books will be the 'big question' sheet, topic introduction, and vocabulary pre-teach. Children will return to these throughout a unit. Some learning, particularly collaborative learning, will be done outside of the book, and will usually be recorded via Seesaw. Children with SEND may have more or less recorded in their books to ensure that they have the opportunity to access all parts of the curriculum. This will be tailored to their own learning needs.	The school has an RE display which shows a key Right linked to RE, as well as examples of children's work. There is no expectation for each classroom to have an RE display, but many classrooms may display examples of good RE work on their walls.

be held to discuss different viewpoints. Younger children will take part in the reading, learning and retelling of religious stories. Children are exposed to religious texts and artefacts. This may range from videos and examples on the board, to physical examples that the children can explore at their desk. A week after the RE Day, a post-teach lesson will take place, enabling teachers to check that end points have been learned, and allowing children an opportunity to reflect on their learning (and their own beliefs).		
How is this subject resourced? Planning and documentation is available to all teachers, as outlined in the above sections. The school has a set of RE Resources in a cupboard to which all teachers have access. This includes holy books such as the Bible, as well as religious artefacts. Additionally, the RE Leads have access to various digital resources from RE Today which are disseminated to staff as and when they will be useful. Where appropriate, the RE Leads will audit the physical resources and order others, especially if a need or request arrives from a member of staff.		