

Introduction to Haringey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Introduction to the 2005 reviewed sections of the syllabus

Religious education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views that offer answers to questions such as these. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

Religious education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses. Religious education encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. Religious education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

Since RE is not part of the National Curriculum it is not subject to its statutory orders such as national attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements. Instead, it is locally determined: under the 1988 Act each LEA is required to establish a Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE) to advise the authority and its teachers on matters concerning RE. It also has a duty to convene an occasional group called an Agreed Syllabus conference, which produces the local Agreed Syllabus which defines the content to be taught for each key stage and advises teachers on the assessment of pupils' learning in RE. The importance of this was underlined in the Education Act 1993, which required every LEA to review its Agreed Syllabus every five years.

Religious education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools, including those in the sixth form, except to those withdrawn by their parents. This requirement does not apply to nursery classes in maintained schools. Religious education is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools and in all maintained schools, other than voluntary aided schools with a religious character, it must be taught according to a locally agreed syllabus. Once adopted by the LEA, the programmes of study of the agreed syllabus set out what pupils should be taught, and the attainment levels set out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages.

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This 2005 reviewed Agreed Syllabus is the method by which that law is implemented in Haringey schools. Members of the Haringey Agreed Syllabus Conference wish to thank the Waltham Forest Agreed Syllabus Conference, the Lewisham Agreed Syllabus Conference, Paul Seto and Sarah Thorley on whose work this material is based.

This Syllabus has taken on board national initiatives and materials, including the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority (QCA) Non-statutory Framework for religious education (2004), in order that teachers and pupils might benefit from the most up to date advice and guidance.

An Agreed Syllabus is for all pupils and the members of the Agreed Syllabus Conference kept this principle at the heart of their work, endeavouring to remember and address the needs of pupils of all faith and cultural backgrounds, gender, disability or special need. This syllabus has been written for all of them. Each of them must see that those things that matter most, in terms of faith and culture, are valued and protected by this syllabus.

It is not the place of Religious Education to nurture pupils into a particular religious standpoint, still less into a system of belief that they will be required to accept. The task of nurturing of a particular faith is that of the home and/or the faith community who wish to do so. Schools are, however, required to promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils and to support them as they become adult members of society.

Young people will develop their own views as believers or non-believers as they move into adult life. The work of the Agreed Syllabus Conference has been undertaken in the belief that Religious Education should play a central role in the promotion of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and should provide a context for all pupils to learn what it is to become an active citizen.

Many pupils may be engaged at times in a search for meaning and truth in their lives. Religious Education based on this syllabus will support them as they explore their responses to ultimate questions in the light of the answers which humankind has found. Some pupils will experience periods of crisis and loss during their school lives; we have tried to ensure that the syllabus encourages the development of an environment and a vocabulary where students can share and be supported through times of great difficulty.

This Agreed Syllabus will enable pupils to grow and develop in their search for truth and values and should encourage the development of a positive ethos both within our schools and the communities around them, demonstrating mutual understanding and respect.

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The Aims of Religious Education

Religious Education in schools celebrates the diversity of religious and human experience. It encourages pupils to grow with the knowledge, skills, sensitivity and understanding to develop as confident and productive members of their local multifaith community and the world.

Religious education should help pupils to:

- Develop a sense of their personal worth, individuality and identity;
- Develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of many religions and beliefs;
- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and non-religious world views represented in Great Britain;
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures;
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to their own beliefs and the teachings of the principal religions and beliefs represented in Great Britain;
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
 - Developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and if how religious teachings and philosophies can relate to them’;
 - Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and to their own understanding and experience’;
 - Developing the ability to reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.

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Time Allocation

The Haringey Agreed Syllabus is based on the expectation that 5% of curriculum time which equates to the following hours, as recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), should be devoted to Religious Education. This equates to the following:

Key Stage 1	36 hours per year
Key Stage 2	45 hour per year
Key Stage 3	45 hours per year
Key Stage 4	40 hours per year
Key Stage 5	18 hours per year

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Statutory and non-statutory content

Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage describes the phase of a child's education from the age of 3 to the end of reception age 5. Religious education is statutory for all registered pupils on the school roll.

During the Foundation Stage children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects, and visiting places of worship. Children listen to and talk about stories. They are introduced to specialist words and use their senses in exploring religious beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect upon their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

The contribution of religious education to the early learning goals

The early learning goals set out what most children should achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The six areas of learning identified in these goals are:

1. personal, social and emotional development;
2. communication, language and literacy;
3. mathematical development;
4. knowledge and understanding of the world;
5. physical development;
6. creative development.

Religious education can make an active contribution to all of these areas and the Agreed Syllabus Foundation Stage RE Advice contains clear links to the goals throughout.

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Key Stage 1

(See diagram on Page 12)

All Part 1 units should be taught in the equivalent of one half-termly (6 week) unit of approximately 1 hour per session.

During Key Stage 1 pupils will study Christianity, Islam, one other principal religion (Hinduism, Judaism or Sikhism) and The Natural World school designed unit.

In the Agreed Syllabus the Key Stage 1 and 2 materials of Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism have been developed in the format 'part 1' and 'part 2'. Schools may select which religion they wish to study alongside Christianity and Islam in Key Stage 1 and they then incorporate the relevant 'part 1' section of that faith into their Key Stage 1 scheme of work.

The Christianity content should be taught in the equivalent of 5 half terms of six hourly sessions each (30 hours) , Islam in 4 half terms of six hourly sessions each (24 hours) and the 'part 1' sections of the other faiths each can be taught in the equivalent of 2 half terms of six hourly sessions each. Therefore in this key stage teachers will teach 12 hours of one other religion of their choice. Exemplar units have been provided to teach this content.

Through RE at this key stage, as pupils talk about what is important to themselves and others, they should learn to value themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging. They will encounter and appreciate different beliefs about God and the world around them. They will also have the opportunity to encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials.

Through the Key Stage 1 study of RE, pupils should learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They should also begin to understand the importance and value of religion for believers, especially other children as they ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world.

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Knowledge, skills and understanding

Attainment Target 1: Learning about religion:

Pupils should be taught to:

- explore a range of religious stories and sacred writings, and talk about their meanings;
- name and explore a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion, noting both similarities and differences;
- identify the importance, for some people, of belonging to a religion and recognise the difference this makes to their lives;
- explore how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and communicate their responses;
- identify and interpret religious symbols and begin to use a range of religious words.

Attainment Target 2: Learning from religion:

Pupils should be taught to:

- reflect upon and consider religious and spiritual feelings, experiences and concepts, for example worship, wonder, praise, thanks, concern, joy and sadness;
- ask and respond to puzzling questions, communicating their ideas;
- identify what matters to them and others, including those with religious commitments, and communicate their responses;
- recognise how religious teachings and ideas about values, particularly those concerned with right and wrong, justice and injustice, make a difference to individuals, families and communities, and communicate their responses.

Breadth of study

During the key stage pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding with a focus on the religions they have chosen and through the themes, providing a range of experiences and opportunities:

Themes

- believing: what people believe about God and humanity;
- story: what makes some stories important for some people;
- celebrations: how and why people celebrate;
- symbols: how and why symbols express meaning;
- leaders and teachers: who have had or continue to have a religious influence on others locally, nationally and globally;
- belonging: where people belong and why belonging is important.

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Experiences and opportunities

- visits to places of worship with a focus on symbols and feelings, and listening to and responding to visitors from local faith communities; asking and answering questions related to their learning in religious education;
- using all their senses in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their creative talents and imagination through art, music, dance, drama and times of quiet reflection;
- sharing their own beliefs, ideas and values and talking about their feelings and experiences.

Key Stage 2

(See diagram on Page 12)

During Key Stage 2 pupils learn about Christianity and the other 5 major religions recognising the impact of religion both locally and globally. The Christianity Part 2 section from the Agreed Syllabus should be taught in 6 half-termly units of 6 sessions, (36 hours in total). The Islam Key Stage 2 section taught in 4 half-termly units of 6 sessions (24 hours in total) and Buddhism in 3 half-termly units of 6 sessions (18 hours in total). Teachers also introduce pupils to the remaining religions that they have not yet studied, building the Part 1 and Part 2 content into their scheme of work (24 hours worth of teaching for each). They also re-visit the faith already studied in Key Stage 1 by incorporating the 'part 2' section from this faith (12 hours in total) into the scheme of work.

In this key stage pupils should begin to make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider the different forms of religious expression as they consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources of guidance and consider their meanings and interpretation. Pupils should begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions and the importance of dialogue between religions. They should have opportunity to communicate their ideas and to recognise and respect other people's viewpoints as they evaluate their own beliefs and values and those of others.

In Key Stage 2 pupils extend their understanding of the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They should also recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between right and wrong, and in valuing what is good and true.

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Knowledge, skills and understanding

Attainment Target 1: Learning about religion

Pupils should be taught to:

- describe the key aspects of religions, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others;
- describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected to, beliefs and teachings;
- identify and begin to describe the similarities and differences between religions;
- investigate the significance of religion in the local, national and global communities;
- make links between different forms of religious expression and understand why they are important in religion, explaining how religious beliefs and teachings can be expressed in a variety of forms;
- describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions;
- use religious language in communicating their knowledge and understanding;
- use and interpret information about religions from a range of sources.

Attainment Target 2: Learning from religion

Pupils should be taught to:

- reflect on the joys and challenges of belonging to a religion, communicating their own and others' responses thoughtfully;
- respond to the challenges of commitment both in their own lives and within religious traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion is shown in a variety of ways;
- discuss their own and others' views of religious truth and belief, expressing their own ideas clearly;
- reflect on issues of right and wrong and their own and others' responses to them;
- reflect on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives.

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Breadth of study

During the key stage the pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through the following themes, experiences and opportunities.

Themes

- beliefs and questions: how people's beliefs about life's meanings and purposes;
- impact of these on their lives;
- teachings and authority: what sacred texts and other sources say about God, the world and human life;
- worship and sacred places: where, how and why people worship;
- pilgrimage and the journey of life: why some places and occasions are sacred to believers;
- symbols and religious expression: how religious and spiritual ideas are expressed;
- inspirational people: where and how religious people find their inspiration;
- religion and the individual: what is expected of a person in following a religion;
- religion, family and community: how religious families and communities practice their faith, and the contributions this makes to local life;
- religions in the world: how religious faith impacts on world events in different ways.

Experiences and opportunities

- encountering religion through visitors or visits to places of worship, and focussing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community;
- discussing religious and philosophical questions, giving reasons for beliefs and disagreeing respectfully;
- exploring spiritual experience and feelings in a variety of ways;
- expressing and communicating their own and others' insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning, through the creative and expressive arts.

The time allocations for the Statutory content for Key Stages 1 & 2 have been described above.

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Please note

A complete set of detailed units of work have been developed in close collaboration with faith community representatives for use by teachers when teaching the syllabus content.

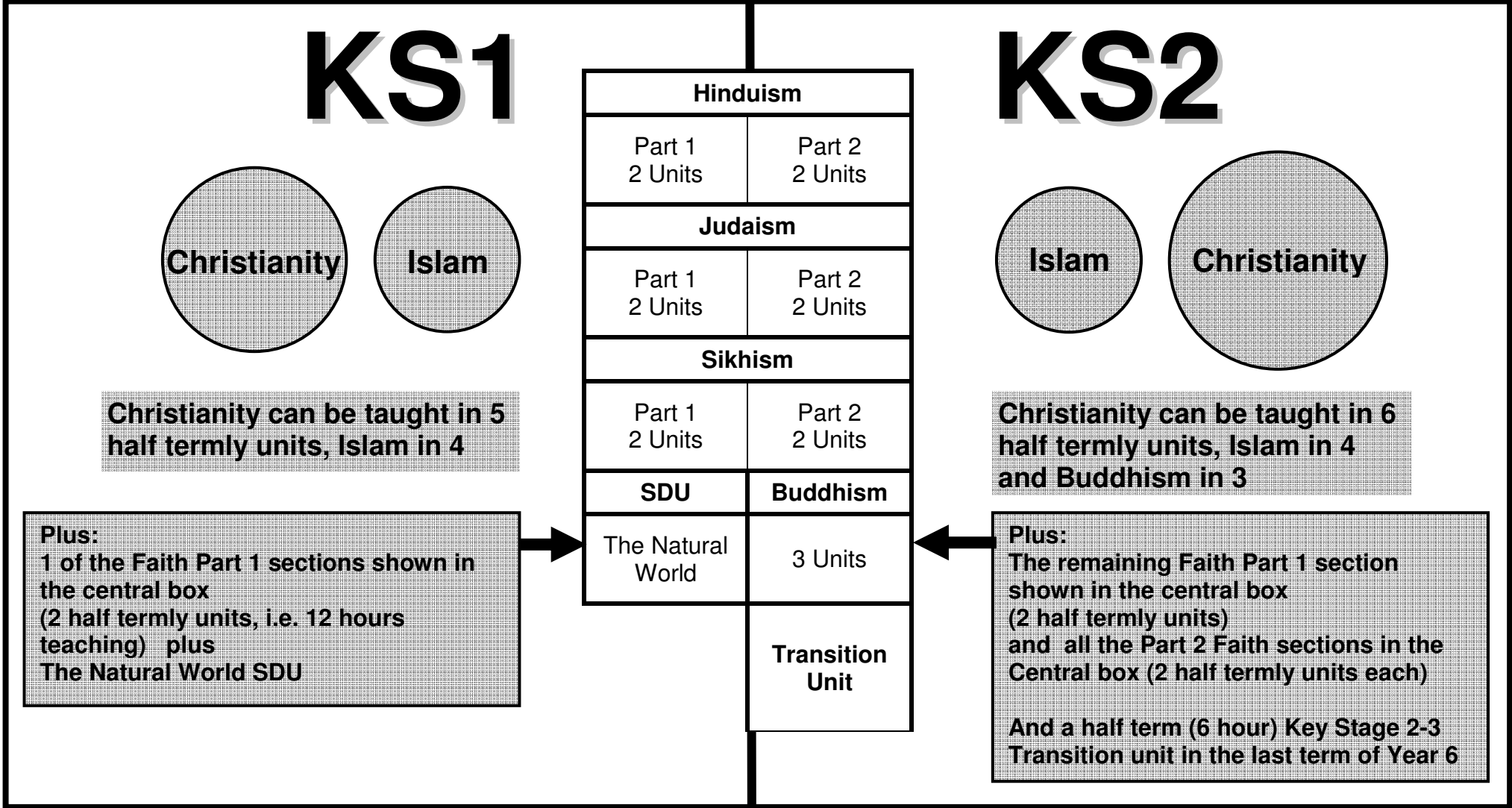
These units have been pitched to match the 'level' requirements of the QCA 8-level scale and the activities and resources recommended have been included with the agreement of faith communities to ensure they are appropriate and sensitive to the beliefs and practices of the faiths.

Should schools wish to devise their own alternative units to teach the statutory content they should ensure that:

- the scheme of work has the appropriate balance of faiths ensuring the Agreed number of units and religions are taught in each key stage;
- units devised teach the requirements of the statutory Agreed content of the syllabus for each faith;
- activities and resources selected are acceptable to the faith communities.

The activities in each unit will need to be adapted during the planning process. They will need to be supplemented with lesson plans that meet individual class requirements, taking into account pupils' different abilities and the resources available. Short term planning is the responsibility of individual teachers who build on the school's medium term planning by taking account of the individual need of the pupils in each class or teaching group for which they are responsible.

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Key Stage 3

During key stage 3 pupils extend their understanding of Christianity and the other 5 principal religions in a local, national and global context. They deepen their understanding of important beliefs, concepts and issues of truth and authority in religion and apply their understanding of religious and philosophical beliefs, teachings and practices to a range of ultimate questions and moral issues, with a focus on self-awareness, relationships, rights and responsibilities. They reflect upon the impact of religion in the world, considering both the importance of inter-faith dialogue but also the tensions which exist within and between religions and beliefs. They interpret religious texts and other sources, recognising both the power and limitations of language and other forms of communication in expressing ideas and beliefs. They enquire into and explain some personal, philosophical, theological and cultural reasons for similarities and differences in religious beliefs and values, both within and between religions. They develop their evaluative skills, showing reasoned and balanced viewpoints when considering their own and others' responses to religious and spiritual issues.

Content for Key Stage 3 has been devised to fit the following:

Transition Unit B	
Interfaith Dialogue Unit	
4 Christianity Units	– Units 10, 11, 12, 13
2 Buddhism units	– Units 4 & 5
2 Hinduism	– Units 6 & 7
2 Islam units	– Units 9 & 10
2 Judaism units	– Units 6 & 7
2 Sikhism units	– Units 6 & 7

Teachers should ensure that they teach the statutory content giving the required amount of time to each faith.

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The Agreed Syllabus also incorporates one of the following optional units adapted from the new QCA materials:

- How do people express their spirituality through the creative arts? (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam)
- How can we answer questions about creation and origins? Learning from religion and science: (Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Humanism)

Knowledge, skills and understanding

Attainment Target 1: Learning about religion

Pupils should be taught to:

- investigate and explain the differing impacts of religious beliefs and teachings on individuals, communities and societies
- analyse and explain how religious beliefs and ideas are transmitted by people, texts and traditions
- investigate and explain why people belong to faith communities and explain the reasons for diversity in religion
- analyse and compare the evidence and arguments used when considering issues of truth in religion and philosophy
- discuss and evaluate how religious beliefs and teachings inform answers to ultimate questions and ethical issues
- apply a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary consistently and accurately, recognising both the power and limitations of language in
- expressing religious ideas and beliefs
- interpret and evaluate a range of sources, texts and authorities, from a variety of contexts
- interpret a variety of forms of religious and spiritual expression.

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Attainment Target 2: Learning from religion

Pupils should be taught to:

- reflect on the relationship between beliefs, teachings and ultimate questions, communicating their own ideas and using reasoned arguments
- evaluate the challenges and tensions of belonging to a religion and the impact of religion in the contemporary world, expressing their own ideas
- express insights into the significance and value of religion and other worldviews on human relationships personally, locally and globally
- reflect and evaluate their own and others' beliefs about world issues such as peace and conflict, wealth and poverty and the importance of the environment, communicating their own ideas
- express their own beliefs and ideas, using a variety of forms of expression.

Key Stage 4

The Haringey Agreed Syllabus Conference has agreed that at Key Stage 4 all students should be entered for an accredited examination course.

This should be either a short or full course GCSE in religious education / religious studies or for special school students where possible a certificate of education course.

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Key Stage 5 – RE in the Sixth Form

Religious education is a statutory requirement for all registered students in Key Stage 5 who are registered in either a school with a sixth form, a sixth form college constituted as a school or registered in a school working as part of a consortium or collaboration except for those withdrawn by their parents. It must be made available in sixth-form colleges to students who wish to take it. Although it is not a requirement in colleges of further education, similar arrangements should apply.

Schools should provide religious education to every student in accordance with legal requirements. It must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus or faith community guidelines.

A wide range of courses are available for students from 14-19. Traditionally students have chosen between two pathways; the academic path usually involves following A/AS courses and may lead to university entrance, the vocational path leads to various levels of qualifications, which at advanced level may also qualify students for university entrance. Students at this stage will therefore represent a wide range of ability, interests, experience and background and will be working on different courses based on one or both of these pathways.

RE courses broaden and enhance the curriculum by giving students the opportunity to consider a wide range of religious, philosophical, psychological, sociological and ethical issues and to develop their own codes of belief.

Sixth form religious education is intended to support and recognise the achievements of all students at Key Stage 5. The flexible course of study explained in these requirements promotes the religious imagination and the development of key skills. It provides for students with a variety of aptitudes, abilities and needs that may not be fully met through current AS and A level examination syllabuses and encourages all students to explore ways of communicating and presenting their knowledge and understanding of religion in a variety of media. In this way sixth form RE caters for and affirms a range of learning styles, individual interests and gifts and talents of students.

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RE at post-16 should be planned as carefully as in the statutory period of schooling and should give due consideration to:

- breadth and balance of knowledge, understanding and skills
- differentiation to meet the needs and abilities of the full range of students;
- the spiritual and moral development of students;
- preparation for work and adult life
- progression and continuity from Key Stage 4 and through the sixth form;
- assessment and accreditation wherever possible including self and peer assessment
- challenge

Teaching and Learning - Attainment targets for Religious Education

The two Attainment Targets, 'Learning about Religions' and 'Learning from Religions' continue to underpin the syllabus at this stage.

Attainment Target 1: Learning about religions students should be taught to:

- investigate, study and interpret significant religious, philosophical and ethical issues, including the study of religious and spiritual experience, in light of their own sense of identity, experience and commitments
- think rigorously and present coherent, widely informed and detailed arguments about beliefs, ethics, values and issues, drawing well-substantiated conclusions
- develop their understanding of the principal methods by which religions and spirituality are studied
- draw upon, interpret and evaluate the rich and varied forms of creative expression in religious life
- use specialist vocabulary to evaluate critically both the power and limitations of religious language.

Attainment Target 2: Learning from religions, students should be taught to:

- reflect on, express and justify their own opinions in light of their learning about religion and their study of religious, philosophical, moral and spiritual questions
- develop their own values and attitudes in order to recognise their rights and responsibilities in light of their learning about religion
- relate their learning in religious education to the wider world, gaining a sense of personal autonomy in preparation for adult life
- develop skills that are useful in a wide range of careers and in adult life generally, especially skills of critical enquiry, creative problem-solving, and communication in a variety of media.

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Teaching and Learning

Attainment targets for Religious Education

The two Attainment Targets, 'Learning about Religions' and 'Learning from Religions' underpin the syllabus throughout.

Attainment Target 1: Learning about religions includes the ability to:

- identify, name, describe and give accounts, in order to build a coherent picture of each religion;
- explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

Attainment Target 2: Learning from religions includes the ability to:

- give an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues;
- reflect on what might be learnt from religions in the light of one's own beliefs and experiences;
- identify and respond to questions of meaning within religions.

All knowledge and understanding described in any of the Units should be planned to ensure that both of these attainment targets are met.

Learning about religion includes enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religion, its key beliefs and teachings, practices, their impact on the lives of believers and communities, and the varying ways in which these are expressed. It also includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues.

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own experiences and their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth and values and commitments, and communicating their responses.

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Exciting and challenging programmes of study should offer a range of experiential teaching and learning strategies.

Suggestions are made within the non-statutory teaching units for Key Stages 1-3 of activities which fulfil the requirements of the syllabus. These reflect the concern of the LEA and the Agreed Syllabus Conference that Religious Education in Haringey schools should be varied, interesting, relevant and stimulating by, for example:

- bringing pupils into first hand contact with people and places from the faiths studied;
- using a wide range of materials from the faiths, e.g. artefacts and stories;
- making appropriate and mutually supportive links with other National Curriculum subjects;
- enabling pupils to have time and space to share their views and feelings, to discuss issues raised in the light of the beliefs of the religions studied and their own views and to explore and question issues raised in a safe, non-threatening and respectful environment.

Skills and attitudes in Religious Education

Throughout the Religious Education planned to deliver the Agreed Syllabus pupils should be encouraged to develop attitudes, concepts and skills which will promote their spiritual development and enable them to approach this subject with sensitivity. For example:

- pupils should be encouraged to learn to listen with respect and sensitivity to others, to stories, poetry and music;
- pupils should be enabled to observe how others have been inspired to communicate their responses, feelings, love and spiritual development through the creative and expressive arts.

Throughout the educational process, pupils should explore religious concepts and reflect on meaning and purpose. This should include personal spiritual experience and ultimate questions of purpose. As pupils explore the beliefs and practices of their own faith and those of others, there should be opportunities for reflection upon their own attitudes, beliefs and experiences.

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Each element of the syllabus will offer a different and special opportunity to consider such issues. Teachers are asked to ensure that they give consideration to these when they deliver religious education. Classroom activities have been planned to enable pupils to express their deepest responses, feelings and beliefs through and within other curriculum areas.

Skills

Religious Education will contribute to pupils' spiritual growth through the development of skills, processes and attitudes. The following skills are central to Religious Education, and are also apparent in other subjects in the curriculum. They should be reflected in attainment targets and in learning opportunities:

a. Investigation - 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 religion(s).

b. Interpretation - this includes:

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

c. Reflection - this includes:

- the ability to reflect on feelings, relationships, experience, ultimate questions, beliefs and practices.

d. Empathy - 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 understand issues from the point of view of others.

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e. Evaluation - this includes:

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

f. Analysis - this includes:

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

g. Synthesis - this includes:

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

h. Application - this includes:

- making the association between religions, and individual, community, national and international life;
- identifying key religious values and their interplay with secular ones;
- developing an ability to recognise and discern the effect that faith can have on the lives of individuals and communities.

i. Expression -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.

Attitudes

While knowledge, skills and understanding are central to religious education; it is also vital that religious education encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others.

The following attitudes are critical for good learning in religious education and need to be consistently developed at each key stage of religious education.

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a. Self awareness

In religious education, this includes:

- enabling pupils to feel confident about their own beliefs and identity and to share them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule;
- developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious and spiritual ideas;
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings;
- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour upon other people.

b. Respect for all

In religious education, this includes:

- developing skills of listening and willingness to learn from others who are different;
- readiness to look at the positive potentialities of diversity and difference;
- sensitivity to the feelings and ideas of others;
- willingness to make a contribution to a diverse society for the well being of all.

c. Open mindedness

In religious education, this includes:

- willingness to seek new insight through learning;
- the ability to engage in argument or disagree reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others);
- the development of attitudes that distinguish between such things as superstition or prejudice and such things as conviction and faith;
- the ability to argue respectfully, reasonably and evidentially about religious, moral and spiritual questions.

d. Appreciation and wonder

In religious education, this includes:

- developing imagination and curiosity in ways that are respectful of faith the beliefs of others;
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery;
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live, and their response to questions of meaning and purpose.

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Attitudes such as respect, care and concern should be promoted through all areas of school life.

There are some concepts that are fundamental to religious education in that they are pre-requisites for entering fully into the study of religions, and learning from that experience. The following should be included:

- a. Community
- b. Belonging
- c. Commitment
- d. Fairness
- e. Justice
- f. Respect

Dealing with discussion and pupils' questions and disclosures

Discussion of sensitive, controversial and challenging religious, philosophical, social and moral issues is vital to RE, as is the need to make sense of such issues in the context of pupils' own life experiences. It is important that all class discussions take place in a climate of trust, cooperation and support.

Teachers need to create a safe environment in which pupils can share their beliefs and feelings, explore their values and attitudes, express their opinions and consider those of others without attracting hostile comment directed to them personally or to their family or a community to which they belong. This will encourage open discussion, enhance pupils' self-esteem and help them develop positive attitudes towards their learning and the beliefs and values of others.

RE, and particularly the second attainment target, 'Learning from religion', might lead pupils to ask difficult questions or even make personal disclosures about their own beliefs or experiences. Understandably, teachers might find such situations difficult to handle; it would seem easy to say the wrong thing. Teachers might be tempted to focus on the first attainment target, 'Learning about religion', in order to avoid potentially difficult situations. However, this denies pupils access to those aspects of RE that are the most educationally rewarding.

Introduction to Haringey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Examples of difficult situations that might arise in the course of RE include pupils:

- asking questions to which different religions give different and/or opposing answers, e.g. 'Was Jesus the Son of God?'
- raising difficult philosophical or theological issues, e.g. 'Why does a supposedly good God allow suffering?', or a more specific or personal version of such a question
- asking what the teacher believes, e.g. 'Do you believe in God?'
- raising spiritual or moral issues in a personal or political context, e.g. 'we can't always forgive people, can we?'
- making comments or asking questions that reflect an offensive or unreflective approach to religion, e.g. 'Are you one of the God squad?'
- making inappropriate value judgements about the faith of other people, e.g. 'People who believe that are stupid!'
- making disclosures that reveal personal faith commitments, e.g. 'I believe that the Qur'an is the absolute word of God'
- making personal disclosures, e.g. 'My grandma died yesterday'.

Such situations might be difficult for one or more reasons:

- they might cause upset or offence to other pupils;
- they might expose the pupil to upsetting comments;
- they might reveal misunderstandings that seem in need of correction;
- there might be no straightforward answer to pupils' questions;
- they might reveal an inability to cope with differences of opinion on the part of some pupils;
- they might be embarrassing;
- there might not be time to deal with them;
- the teacher might not have the training or knowledge needed to deal with them.

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There are no 'off-the-shelf' ways of dealing with such classroom incidents. Teachers will need to use their professional judgement and display sensitivity. The ethos of the school, and the contribution of RE to it, will be important in establishing the right climate for dealing with such questions and incidents. The following practical guidelines might help.

Suggestions

- Encourage the use of 'owning and grounding' language such as 'in my opinion' or 'some Hindus would say'. This allows belief statements to be made in the classroom without everyone feeling they have to agree.
- Treat the difficult question or incident as a positive rather than negative event. Remember, it is the way the incident is dealt with and how the class response is managed that matters most.
- Affirm the importance of pupils' contributions, even if you don't agree with them, with phrases like 'That is an excellent question – I've often wondered about that too' or 'You're not the only one who doesn't know the answer to that'.
- Help pupils to understand that diversity of opinion and the existence of unanswerable questions are aspects of life that we all have to accept, and that they do not disappear as they grow older or wiser.
- Encourage an awareness of diversity without undermining the pupil's own beliefs. Allow for the possibility of a range of answers or opinions, e.g. use 'most Christians would probably say...but some Muslims would think differently....'
- Encourage a 'let's explore this together' approach in which the teacher is a participant, not an expert, e.g. use the situation to open up rather than close down conversation or thinking.
- Encourage further exploration by suggesting that pupils ask their questions of others, including faith community leaders, or look for help in resource centres or other places. Advise pupils that their family, faith community and friends can play important roles in helping to provide answers and information.
- Correct factual misinformation, factual errors or misinformation, wherever possible, without confrontation. At the same time, always respect the rights of pupils, their families and members of their communities to hold their own beliefs.
- Pupils might make personal disclosures out of a need for comfort. It might be possible in some cases to suggest a follow-up to the pupil's disclosure (e.g. personal tutor) without 'fobbing-off' the importance of it. If this is not possible, assign the class an activity that provides time to attend to the pupil or gives the pupil some personal space.

Introduction to Haringey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Resources

Within the syllabus a range of resources are recommended and these resources are, at the time of publication, those that RE professionals and faith communities agree are appropriate to use.

It is important that schools audit their resources regularly, removing any which are unusable or which give a poor image of the faith concerned. In each school staff should be made aware of what is available for their use and how items may be accessed and used.

Using artefacts

It is important that pupils are introduced to the sacred objects of the faiths. Pupils should be taught how to treat texts and objects with care, sensitivity and respect. A study of sacred objects in Key Stage 1 should give pupils the opportunity to share their own 'special things', both secular and sacred, in order to appreciate the concept of an item being 'special'.

Cross curricular links

Religious Education should make links with the whole curriculum where appropriate whilst ensuring that its integrity as a subject is recognised.

Sensitivities

It is important to remember that Muslims should not draw the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) or any of the other Messengers of Allah. Muslims would consider it inappropriate to depict any of these in drama or role-play. Equally Sikhs would consider it inappropriate to depict any of the Gurus.

Pbuh The words 'Salla-llahu alaihi wa salaam' - peace and blessings of Allah upon him are used by Muslims every time the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned. You will find this placed throughout the document to represent this phrase.

In Arabic the words 'Alaihi salaam' - peace be upon him are used by Muslims after the names of prophets and the twelve Shi'ah Imam are mentioned. Equally 'pbuh' may be used in place of this phrase.

Introduction to Haringey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Inclusion

Providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils

Schools have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils.

The National Curriculum and the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education are the starting points for planning a school curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

This is an adaptation of the statutory inclusion statement on providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils and outlines how teachers can modify, as necessary, the National Curriculum programmes of study to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage. It has been modified to meet the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus.

The statement sets out three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of people.

Applying these principles should keep to a minimum the need for aspects of the National Curriculum to be disapplied for a pupil. Schools are able to provide other curriculum opportunities outside the National Curriculum to meet the needs of individuals or groups of pupils such as speech and language therapy and mobility training.

Introduction to Haringey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Three principles for inclusion.

In planning and teaching the Agreed Syllabus, teachers are required to have due regard to the following principles:

A. Setting suitable learning challenges

1. Teachers should aim to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. The Agreed Syllabus sets out what most pupils should be taught at each key stage - but teachers should teach the knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that suit their pupils' abilities. This may mean modifying the non-statutory units by devising different activities or using extra resources or by choosing knowledge, skills and understanding from earlier or later key stages so that individual pupils can progress and show what they can achieve. Where it is appropriate for pupils to make extensive use of content from an earlier key stage, there may not be time to teach all aspects of the age-related programmes of study. A similarly flexible approach will be needed to take account of any gaps in pupils' learning resulting from missed or interrupted schooling [for example, that may be experienced by travellers, refugees, those in care with long term medical problems, such as head injuries, and those with degenerative conditions].
2. For pupils whose attainments fall significantly below the expected levels at a particular key stage, a much greater degree of differentiation will be necessary. In these circumstances, teachers may need to use the content of the Agreed Syllabus as a resource or to provide a context, in planning learning appropriate to the age and requirements of their pupils.

For pupils whose attainments significantly exceed the expected level of attainment during a particular key stage, teachers will need to plan suitably challenging work. Teachers should plan to extend the breadth and depth of study with individually challenging tasks devised particularly to meet the needs of those pupils.

All of the non-statutory units in the Agreed Syllabus contain suggestions for activities to challenge the most able or gifted pupils.

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B. Responding to pupil's diverse learning needs.

1. When planning, teachers should set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve, including boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, pupils with disabilities, pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupils of different ethnic groups, including travellers refugees and asylum seekers, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Teachers need to be aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths, which will influence the way in which they learn. Teachers should plan their approaches to teaching and learning so that all pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively.
2. To ensure that they meet the full range of pupils' needs, teachers should be aware of the requirements of the equal opportunities legislation that covers race, gender and disability.
3. Teachers should take specific action to respond to pupils' diverse needs by:
 - a. creating effective learning environments;
 - b. securing their motivation and concentration;
 - c. providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches;
 - d. using appropriate assessment approaches;
 - e. setting targets for learning.

The Agreed Syllabus non-statutory units incorporate activities planned to appeal to learners with different learning styles. Teachers intending to modify these units will need to ensure that the new activities that they devise are as broad in their appeal.

Examples for B/3a - creating effective learning environments in which:

- the contributions of all pupils is valued;
- all pupils can feel secure and are able to contribute appropriately;
- stereotypical views are challenged and pupils learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, religion, ability or disability;
- pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions and behaviours both in school and in the wider community;
- all forms of bullying and harassment, including racial harassment are challenged;
- pupils are enabled to participate safely in clothing appropriate to their religious beliefs.

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Examples for B/3b - securing motivation and concentration by:

- using teaching approaches to appeal to different learning styles;
- using, where appropriate, a range of organisational approaches such as setting, grouping or individual work, to ensure that learning needs are properly addressed;
- varying subject content and presentation so that this matches their learning needs;
- planning work which builds on their interests and cultural experiences;
- planning appropriately challenging work for those whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language skills;
- using materials which reflect social and cultural diversity and provide positive images, gender, religions and disability;
- planning and monitoring the pace of work so that they all have a chance to learn effectively and achieve success;
- taking action to maintain interest and continuity of learning for pupils who may be absent for extended periods of time.

Examples for B/3c - providing equality of opportunity by:

- ensuring that boys and girls are able to participate in the same curriculum;
- taking account of the interests and concerns of boys and girls by using a range of activities and contexts for work and allowing a variety of interpretations and outcomes;
- avoiding gender stereotyping when organising pupils into groups, assigning them to activities or arranging access to equipment;
- taking account of pupils' specific religious or cultural beliefs relating to the presentation of ideas or experiences or to the use of particular types of equipment;
- enabling the fullest possible participation of pupils with disabilities or particular medical needs in all subjects, offering positive role models and making provision, where necessary, to facilitate access to activities with appropriate support, aids or adaptations.

Examples for B/3d - using appropriate assessment approaches that:

- allow for different learning styles and ensure that pupils are given the chance and the encouragement to demonstrate their competence and attainment through appropriate means;
- are familiar to the pupils and for which they have been adequately prepared;
- use materials which are free from discrimination and stereotyping in any form;
- provide clear and unambiguous feedback to pupils to aid further learning.

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Examples for B/3e - setting targets for learning that:

- build on pupils' knowledge, experiences, interests and strengths to improve areas of weakness and demonstrate progression over time;
- are attainable and yet challenging and help pupils to develop their self esteem and confidence in their ability to learn.

C. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

A minority of pupils will have particular learning and assessment requirements that go beyond the provisions described in sections A and B and, if not addressed, could create barriers to learning. These requirements are likely to arise as a consequence of a pupil having a special educational need or disability or may be linked to a pupil's progress in learning English as an additional language.

1. Teachers must take account of these requirements and make provision, where necessary, to support individuals or groups of pupils to enable them to participate effectively in the curriculum and assessment activities.

Pupils with special educational needs

2. Curriculum planning and assessment for pupils with special educational needs must take account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the pupil. Teachers will encounter a wide range of pupils with special educational needs, some of whom will also have disabilities (see paragraphs C/4 and C/5). In many cases, the action necessary to respond to an individual's requirements for curriculum access will be met through greater differentiation of tasks and materials, consistent with school-based intervention as set out in the SEN Code of Practice. A small number of pupils may need further specific support to access the curriculum. Teachers should, where appropriate, work closely with representatives of other agencies who may be supporting the pupil.
3. Teachers should take specific action to provide access to learning for pupils with special educational needs by:
 - a. providing for pupils who need help with communication, language and literacy;
 - b. planning, where necessary, to develop pupils' understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences;
 - c. planning for pupils' full participation in learning and in physical and practical activities;
 - d. helping pupils to manage their behaviour, to take part in learning effectively and safely, and at Key Stage 4, to prepare for work;
 - e. helping individuals to manage their emotions, particularly trauma or stress, and to take part in learning.

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Examples for C/3a - providing for pupils who need help with communication, language and literacy through:

- using texts that pupils can read and understand
- using visual and written materials in different formats, including large print, symbol text and Braille;
- using ICT, other technological aids and taped materials;
- using alternative and augmentative communication, including signs and symbols;
- using translators, communicators and amanuenses.

Examples for C/3b - developing pupils' understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences, by:

- using materials and resources that pupils can access through sight, touch, taste or smell;
- using word descriptions and other stimuli to make up for lack of first-hand experiences;
- using ICT, visual and other materials to increase pupils' knowledge of the wider world;
- encouraging pupils to take part in everyday activities such as play, drama, class visits and exploring the environment.

Examples for C/3c - planning for pupils' full participation in learning and in practical activities through:

- using specialist aids and equipment;
- providing support from adults or peers when needed;
- adapting tasks or environments;
- providing alternative activities, where necessary.

Examples for C/3d - helping pupils to manage their behaviour, take part in learning effectively and safely, and, at Key Stage 4, prepare for work by:

- setting realistic demands and stating them explicitly;
- using positive behaviour management, including a clear structure of rewards and sanctions;
- giving pupils every chance and encouragement to develop the skills they need to work well with a partner or a group;
- teaching pupils to value and respect the contribution of others.

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Examples for C/3e - helping individuals manage their emotions and take part in learning through:

- identifying aspects of learning in which the pupil will engage and plan short-term, easily achievable goals in selected activities;
- providing positive feedback to reinforce and encourage learning and build self-esteem;
- selecting tasks and materials sensitively to avoid unnecessary stress for the pupil;
- creating a supportive learning environment in which the pupil feels safe and is able to engage with learning;
- allowing time for the pupil to engage with learning and gradually increasing the range of activities and demands.

Pupils with disabilities

4. Not all pupils with disabilities will necessarily have special educational needs. Many pupils with disabilities learn alongside their peers with little need for additional resources beyond the aids that they use as part of their daily life, such as a wheelchair, a hearing aid or equipment to aid vision. Teachers must take action, however, in their planning to ensure that these pupils are enabled to participate as fully and effectively as possible. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset of work.
5. Teachers should take specific action to enable the effective participation of pupils with disabilities by:
 - a. planning appropriate amounts of time to allow for the satisfactory completion of tasks
 - b. planning opportunities, where necessary, for the development of skills in practical aspects of the curriculum
 - c. identifying aspects of programmes of study and attainment targets that may present specific difficulties for individuals

Examples for C/5a - planning appropriate amounts of time to allow pupils to complete tasks satisfactorily through:

- taking account of the very slow pace at which some pupils will be able to record work, either manually or with specialist equipment, and of the physical effort required;
- being aware of the high levels of concentration necessary for some pupils when following or interpreting text or graphics, particularly when using vision;
- allocating sufficient time, opportunity and access to equipment for pupils to gain information through experimental work and detailed observation, including the use of microscopes;
- being aware of the effort required by some pupils to follow oral work, whether through use of residual hearing, lip reading or a signer, and of the tiredness or loss of concentration that may occur.

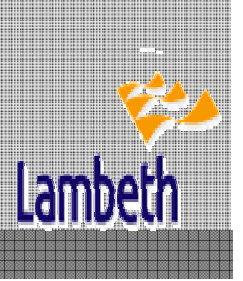
Introduction to Haringey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Examples for C/5b - creating opportunity for the development of skills in practical aspects of the curriculum through:

- providing adapted, modified or alternative activities and ensuring that these have integrity and enable pupils to make appropriate progress;
- providing alternative or adapted activities in practical work for pupils who are unable to manipulate tools, equipment or materials or who may be allergic to certain types of materials;
- ensuring that all pupils can be included and participate safely in off-site visits, local studies, visits to museums, religious buildings and sites.

Examples for C/5c - overcoming specific difficulties for individuals presented by aspects of the programmes of study and attainment targets through:

- using approaches to enable hearing impaired pupils to learn about sound in worship;
- helping visually impaired pupils to learn about the use of symbolism and light in religions, visual resources and to evaluate images in work linked to art and design.



The value of visits

Visits can be an excellent resource for religious education provided they are managed in a sensitive and thoughtful way. They can provide opportunities for pupils to learn:

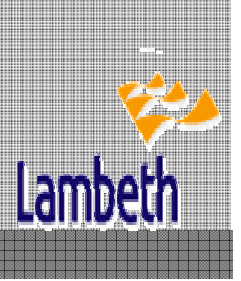
- by personal experiences that involve the sense of touch, smell, taste, hearing and sight;
- by meeting and talking to people from the faith community;
- by behaving with appropriate respect.

Furthermore visits provide an important link between schools and local faith communities.

Haringey is fortunate in having a wealth and variety of places to visit available in the locality. Nevertheless, visits raise issues for teachers, parents and faith leaders. Some of the pitfalls can be avoided by careful and thorough preparation and organisation.

The context

The Haringey Agreed Syllabus includes many units of work where visits to local places of worship are recommended or are essential. However, teachers will appreciate that visits to places of worship are only one aspect of RE. They may be an interesting and helpful approach, but must be seen in the wider context of classroom activities rather than as a self contained exercise. The purpose and value of suggested visits are clearly explained within each unit and ensure continuity and progression. There are opportunities to re-visit the same place of worship to focus on different aspects, e.g. to look internal and external features of the building, to explore symbols, to hear about life and work of the community.



Practical procedures and preparation

When planning you must consider:

- the purpose of the proposed visit – what is the unit’s precise aim and how does the visit contribute to this?
- its place within the RE scheme of work/Agreed Syllabus.
- practical procedures, e.g. timing, travel, expense, etc. Teachers should check their school policy and consult their Educational Visits co-ordinator. Letters to parents should explain the educational aims and the overall context and purpose of the visit. They should give details about times, expenses, dress, etc. and provide a reply slip for consent or refusal. They should also emphasise that the visit will not involve participation in any acts of worship. Wherever possible parents should be invited to accompany the pupils.
- the right of refusal – parents have the right to withdraw children from RE, and this includes visits to places of worship. However there should always be an opportunity to discuss any issues, concerns and anxieties parents may have and to reassure them should their concerns be based on any misconceptions about the experience that has been planned. It is often useful to share planning with parents and to explain the context of this visit in the programme of visits that pupils will experience across the RE curriculum.

Organising the visit

Phone or write to the nominated contact person at the place of worship. Remember that there may well not be someone available full time to speak to you and even if there is, they are often very busy, so allow them time to call back. Enquire about the possibility of a visit giving brief details, and where possible make arrangements for a preliminary visit. Remember that details about contacts at local places of worship change regularly so please check that you have the correct information about the person who will be able to host your visit.

Preliminary visit

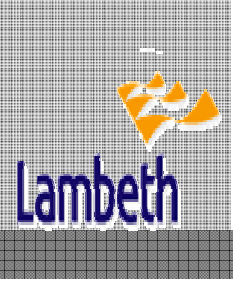
This is important as it enables you to discuss the possibilities and to decide whether the building is the most appropriate in relation to the aims. Have a look around the building with the host and take notes. Discuss whether seeing other rooms in the building, e.g. kitchens, rooms used for playgroups or religious classes, would be worthwhile. Pupils should understand that places of worship often serve their communities in a variety of ways. Discuss aims with the host and negotiate an understanding of the purpose of the visit and what is expected. You must make it clear that the pupils' role is as observers rather than participators in an act of worship, and discuss any implications this may have regarding acceptable behaviour, e.g. bowing, eating food offered. There are issues here around interpretation – pupils and families from different faith backgrounds or none. Please give the prospective 'guide' a copy of the relevant unit of work so that they can see how the visit fits into the unit.

Information checklist

You need to tell the 'host' at the place of worship:

- the specific objectives of the visit;
- the age of the pupils;
- the approximate number of children;
- ability range;
- range of their religious/non-religious backgrounds;
- whether there are likely to be members of their own congregation present;
- the pupils' level of prior knowledge about the religion concerned;
- what you would like the pupils to be able to do;
- the place of the visit in the overall topic or scheme of work;
- the time you will arrive and when you will leave.

Introduction: Guidance for Visiting Places of Worship



You will need to ask the host:

- if there are special requirements or sensitivities regarding dress and whether these apply to both sexes;
- if there are any requirements regarding general behaviour, e.g. where or how they should sit and remember that attitudes towards sacredness of the building will vary in different traditions;
- if any activities are prohibited in the place of worship, e.g. taking photographs or sketching;
- who will be hosting the particular visit – it is important that the person has some experience of communicating with children;
- suitable times for visits – dates to avoid or those that might be particularly interesting;
- if there are any specific extra topics they can talk about that would be of particular interest in the context of this unit of work;
- about the facilities for the disabled;
- about the availability of toilet facilities.

Always confirm details with the host and make sure that there is a contact telephone number in case of difficulties.

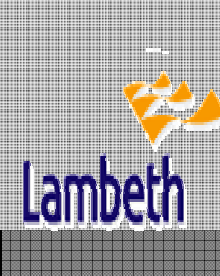
N.B. Please avoid wherever possible taking any food into a place of worship.

Sensitivities

In all places of worship teachers need to be aware that their party may meet members of the community, some of which may be experiencing times of great sadness or engaged in private worship. Pupils need to be prepared to behave sensitively on these occasions.

Some places of worship welcome photographs whilst others find this intrusive. Ask beforehand.

Introduction: Guidance for Visiting Places of Worship

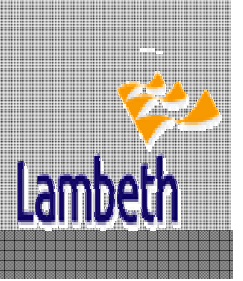


Dress Conventions:

Many religions teach that heads should be covered in a place of worship as it is God's house. Non-believers observe this as a sign of respect for the faith. Head coverings should not include slogans or advertisements. Where shoes are to be removed, please make sure socks or tights are clean and in good condition. Modest dress means clothes that are not too short or tight, do not reveal arms, legs or chests and enable pupils to sit on the floor in comfort.

Religion	Modest dress	Heads covered	Shoes removed	No leather	Males and females separated	Wash hands
Christianity	√	Sometimes				
Buddhism	√		√			
Hinduism	√		√	√	Sometimes	√
Islam	√	√	√		√	√
Judaism	√	√			Sometimes	
Sikhism	√	√	√	√	Seated separately	√

Introduction: Guidance for Visiting Places of Worship



Including visits to graveyards

Visits to local Christian places of worship could include studying evidence in a local graveyard to find out about the Christian community in the past. These visits should not be undertaken without appreciating that through these visits pupils will potentially be put in the position of thinking and talking about issues of life and death. Therefore beyond taking the usual care with the organisation of an off-site visit, teachers will need to be aware of what their pupils will encounter on their visit so that they can prepare them for the visit accordingly.

The religious and cultural views to burial shared by members of the class and their families must be taken into consideration. All pupils will need to be prepared for what they are going to see. Pupils will need to be introduced to the facts about Christian burial practices as sensitively as possible.

Parents/ carers should be informed that the visit will include this particular aspect and should be encouraged to inform the school if they have anxieties or concerns as early as possible. This will enable steps to be taken to allay these concerns and reassure them that their child is being supported with great care. For example parents/carers may be concerned for the welfare of any pupil who has recently suffered bereavement or who is going through a grieving process.

Although loss, death and bereavement affect everyone at some time, in our society this area of experience is one which people appear to find difficult to discuss. It is therefore important that teachers plan and make provision for developing sensitive foundations and support networks within schools so that pupils can experience a safe environment where they can develop a vocabulary to discuss these issues, share their experiences, be supported and raise their own questions.

When members of the Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist faith traditions die their bodies are usually cremated and their ashes are returned to the elements, usually via flowing water; pupils from these communities may not therefore be used to the custom of burying bodies. If their only link to this practice has been through videos or television programmes they may consider the graveyard a threatening place. Inside a place of worship where there is a crypt or where bodies have been interred, pupils will realise that they are walking over them. Members of many faith communities may find this distasteful and will benefit from talking in advance about what they are going to experience and reflecting on their feelings about this.

Generally pupils should be encouraged to show respect for the dead and the belief of others. Graveyards and cemeteries are places of remembrance and memories and pupils should be aware that other people may be visiting to remember loved ones through quiet thought or tending a grave.